



# Your intercountry adoption planning workbook

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[Intercountry Adoption Australia](#)

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## Contents

Starting your intercountry adoption journey .....	2
Steps in the intercountry adoption process .....	2
Important considerations before contacting your state or territory central authority .....	3
Making an enquiry to your state or territory central authority .....	4
Deciding which country to adopt from .....	5
Creating your shortlist of countries .....	5
Attending education sessions and making a formal application .....	6
Education session attended .....	6
Lodging your application .....	6
Awaiting adoption assessment and decision .....	7
Sending your application to your country of choice .....	8
Matching a child with your family .....	8
Starting the immigration process .....	9
Travelling to meet your child .....	9
Your travel checklist .....	9
Meeting your child for the first time .....	9
Arriving back home with your child .....	10
Finalising the adoption .....	11
What support is available for adoptive families? .....	11
Who do I contact for more information on intercountry adoption? .....	11

## Starting your intercountry adoption journey

Intercountry Adoption Australia is a national service created by the Australian Government to act as a central point of contact for people at all stages of the intercountry adoption process.

Giving a child a new home in Australia is a life-changing decision, and there are many things to consider before deciding whether intercountry adoption is for you.

So that you can be prepared and committed to the challenges that lie ahead, this workbook will take you through the key steps in what can be a long and complex process.

Use this workbook to carefully consider the options that are available to you, and to prepare yourself for the requirements of the intercountry adoption process.

To ensure you have access to the most current information, we recommend regularly visiting the [Intercountry Adoption Australia](#)

Our website contains the information you'll need to complete the blank spaces within your workbook. It is a vital source of information for anyone considering intercountry adoption.

Should you have specific questions, please contact us at Intercountry Adoption Australia by calling 1800 197 760 between 9:00am and 5:00pm, Monday to Friday, or use our online contact form.

## Steps in the intercountry adoption process

1. Initial enquiry
2. Education sessions and formal application
3. Adoption assessment and decision about the approval of an application
4. If approved, documents sent to country of choice and application awaits approval
5. Placement proposal (the matching of a child with a family) issued by the overseas authority
6. Immigration application process
7. Travel to meet the child
8. Start of post-placement support
9. Finalisation of the adoption (where required)

## **Important considerations before contacting your state or territory central authority**

If you have not already spoken to someone at Intercountry Adoption Australia, call us on 1800 197 760. We are here to help answer your questions about the process of adopting from overseas.

Should you proceed with applying to adopt a child from overseas, you will deal mainly with the central authority in your state or territory. This is the government department responsible for managing your adoption application, and for assessing your eligibility to adopt in line with state or territory adoption legislation.

Below, we've outlined some things you may like to consider before contacting your state or territory. Give these questions some thought and write your answers in the spaces provided.

**What are my motivations for wanting to adopt from overseas?**

**Am I prepared for a long wait, with no guarantee that an adoption will occur?**

**Am I emotionally equipped to raise a child from a different cultural background who may have special physical, intellectual or behavioural needs?**

**Do I have the financial resources to adequately support a child?**

Once you've considered these factors, and have decided to explore intercountry adoption further, your next step is to contact the central authority in your state or territory.

Go to [Intercountry Adoption Australia](#) to find the following information:

Name of my state/territory central authority:

Website address:

Email address:

Phone number:

Fax number:

## **Making an enquiry to your state or territory central authority**

You must be approved for intercountry adoption by your state or territory central authority before your application can be sent overseas.

The application process, eligibility criteria, and fees vary depending on the state or territory you live in. There are also travel costs and fees charged by the overseas countries involved, and these also vary.

Before talking with someone, you might find it useful to write a list of questions or an outline of what you want to say to help guide your conversation.

Some specific questions you may want to ask are:

**Who are the children requiring adoption and where do they live?**

**What are the basic eligibility requirements in my state/territory?**

Marital status:

Age:

Health:

Pregnancy and infertility:

Children already in my family:

Other:

**What are the fees and costs?**

**What activities are involved in the approval process (for example police checks, home visits, health checks etc.)?**

**When is the next information session in my state/territory?**

Date:

Cost: \$

Location:

Contact person:

**What do I need to bring with me to the information session?**

**Other questions:**

## Deciding which country to adopt from

If you are an Australian citizen, and you are currently living in Australia, you may apply to adopt from a country with which Australia has an active intercountry adoption arrangement.

Go to [Intercountry Adoption Australia](#) to review the full list of partner countries.

Each country has its own specific eligibility criteria, fees and charges, and average waiting times.

While you may choose to shortlist countries based on these factors (see page 6), your application can only be sent to one country.

## Creating your shortlist of countries

To help create your shortlist, go to [Intercountry Adoption Australia](#) to find the information required below:

<b>ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</b>	<b>COUNTRY 1:</b>	<b>COUNTRY 2:</b>	<b>COUNTRY 3:</b>
Marriage			
Residency			
Age			
Citizenship			
Health			
Education			
Religion			
Number of children in family			
Finances			
Criminal record			
<b>CURRENT AVERAGE WAITING TIMES</b>			
<b>CURRENT FEES AND CHARGES</b>			

## Attending education sessions and making a formal application

Education sessions are run by most state or territory central authorities. Some will require you to complete an expression of interest, questionnaire or pre-assessment of your eligibility before you attend.

Documentation	Required	Submitted
Expression of interest	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Questionnaire	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-assessment of eligibility	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

These sessions cover a range of topics relating to intercountry adoption, including applicant eligibility, the characteristics of children, the challenges and risks you may face and information about countries you can adopt from.

Further sessions may also occur throughout your application and assessment process.

### Education session attended

Date:

Venue:

Conducted by:

Key topics:

Notes:

### Lodging your application

Detailed information on the application process is available from your state or territory central authority. Once you are fully informed, you can choose to lodge an application to adopt. In some states and territories, following the education sessions, there is a time limit for you to lodge your application.

Time limit to lodge my application:            months/years

## Awaiting adoption assessment and decision

Name of case manager:

Phone:

Email:

The approval process in your state or territory may include health, police and referee checks as well as interviews with an adoption assessor (social worker or psychologist). If approved, the length of time your approval is valid depends on the state or territory you live in. Your case manager will be able to provide you with more detailed information to help you fill out the below.

Checks required:

Check	Required	Completed	Length of time approval is valid
Health check	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Police check	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Referee check	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Adoption assessor interview	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

### Appointment 1

Date:           Time:

Notes:

### Appointment 2

Date:           Time:

Notes:

### Appointment 3

Date:           Time:

Notes:

### Appointment 4

Date:           Time:

Notes:

## **Sending your application to your country of choice**

If your adoption application is approved, it will be sent to your nominated overseas country for approval by their authorities. You should note that your state or territory central authority may not be able to send your application immediately if that country imposes an application quota restricting the number of applications Australia is allowed to send per year.

If approved by the overseas country, your application will be placed on their waiting list, pending a placement proposal (the matching of a child with your family).

The decision to place a child for adoption with a family rests with the overseas adoption authority and timeframes vary. Waiting periods can be affected by the number of children requiring intercountry adoption, the number of applications received by the country, and the resources of the overseas country.

If you are on a waiting list for an extended period, an updated adoption assessment may need to be carried out. This will depend on the state or territory you live in.

**While you are waiting for a placement proposal, you might like to start learning about the culture of the country you have applied to adopt from. Some ideas could include starting to learn the language, or learning to cook some of their national dishes.**

**Write your thoughts about what you might like to do in the space provided below, then discuss with your case manager, family and friends.**

## **Matching a child with your family**

If the overseas authority matches a child with your family, they will forward a placement proposal, including social and medical information about the child, for approval by your state or territory central authority. The amount of information included in placement proposals varies considerably across countries, and depends on the child's individual circumstances.

There are a small number of special needs programs where your state or territory central authority may be asked by the overseas country to assess a list of children requiring adoption and to propose a match with one or more Australian families. If the overseas country is willing to consider the proposed match, they will seek further information.

**Is there anything in my placement proposal that I would like further information on?**

**Who can help me find this information (this may be your case manager, your local GP, or you can call us on 1800 197 760)?**

**If I accept this placement proposal, what services in my local area are available to support my family, my child, and their specific needs?**

## Starting the immigration process

When you are ready to talk about Australian visa or citizenship requirements and processes, contact us at Intercountry Adoption Australia and we can refer you to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP).

The process you follow will vary depending on the country involved and whether you choose for your adopted child to enter Australia on a visa or by applying for citizenship prior to traveling to Australia (if this option is available to you).

For further information about Australian immigration and citizenship processes, contact Intercountry Adoption Australia by calling 1800 197 760 between 9:00am and 5:00pm.

## Travelling to meet your child

You'll be required to travel overseas to accept placement of your child, and to complete overseas adoption formalities or court proceedings.

Travel arrangements should not be confirmed until your state or territory central authority advises you to do so.

Travelling to meet your child can be an emotional and exhausting experience. There are lots of things to organise in addition to flights and transport. Some countries specify travel dates and nominate your accommodation. The timing and number of journeys depends on the overseas country, and it can sometimes be a few months before you travel overseas to meet your child.

The Smartraveller travel advisory service can help you make informed decisions about overseas travel. The service highlights the range of risks that you could face at your destination, whether related to security, safety, health, local laws, entry/exit requirements, or natural disasters. Areas that are clearly not safe for travel are also highlighted.

As part of any pre-trip planning, we strongly recommend that you read and subscribe to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's [Smartraveller](#) service.

### Your travel checklist

Use the travel checklist below as a guide for planning your trip:

- Confirm your length of stay
- Confirm travel dates
- Apply for your visa
- Book your flights
- Purchase travel insurance
- Book accommodation
- Arrange transfers

Notes:

## Meeting your child for the first time

You will probably feel quite emotional when meeting your child face-to-face for the first time. You will have the opportunity to spend some time together and get to know each other. This can be a particularly anxious time for the child, but a translator may be present to help you communicate.

**Think about what questions you would like to ask your child, as well as what you want to share about yourself and your life in Australia. Write your thoughts in the space provided below, then discuss these approaches with your case manager, family and friends.**

**The time you spend with your child in their country is a good opportunity to gather additional information about your child. What are some questions you might like to ask the carers and others that interact with your child on a daily basis? Write your thoughts in the space provided below, then discuss with your case manager, family and friends.**

**Some parents who have adopted from overseas have put together life story books or information for their children on their origin. Some ideas include taking photographs of things, places or people in your child's life, or collecting items that may be familiar or of significance to the child. Write your thoughts about what you might like to do in the space provided below, then discuss with your case manager, family and friends.**

## **Arriving back home with your child**

After your child comes home with you, your case manager will visit your home to check that your family is settling in well together. Reporting requirements for this will vary depending on the legal status of the child and the overseas country requirements.

There are several visits in the first year, and some countries require reports beyond the initial 12 months.

These visits are to supervise the well-being of your child and provide support during the settling-in period. A health screening may also be required during the first weeks of placement, and a full medical check with an appropriately qualified medical professional is recommended as soon as possible on return to Australia.

## Finalising the adoption

The final official step in the intercountry adoption process is where you become the legal parent of your child.

The way in which an adoption is 'finalised' depends on the process used in the overseas country, and the procedures of your state or territory.

For some of Australia's intercountry adoption arrangements, a final adoption order or decision is made in the overseas country, which may be recognised under Australian law.

For other intercountry adoption arrangements, the adoption is not finalised overseas. In these cases, the adoption needs to be finalised in line with state or territory processes (usually in a state or territory court) after your child arrives in Australia.

In both cases, a period of post placement supervision takes place after your child enters Australia.

## What support is available for adoptive families?

We understand that your journey doesn't end on the day your child arrives in your home. Education and support is available to people at all stages of the intercountry adoption process. Your state or territory central authority is the main provider of support and advice, but a range of private organisations also support people who are considering adoption, or people who have already adopted. While the central authority in your state or territory is best placed to make a local recommendation, you can also visit [Intercountry Adoption Australia](#) for information on other resources, including Australian Government support.

## Who do I contact for more information on intercountry adoption?

If you'd like to speak to someone about the process of adopting from overseas, phone Intercountry Adoption Australia on 1800 197 760 between 9:00am and 5:00pm, Monday to Friday, or use our online contact form.