

FAQs on Adoption

1. Can a prospective adoptive parent choose the sex of the child to be adopted?

No, the adoptive applicants are no longer allowed to specify their gender preference. They should be open to either gender.

2. How much are the fees?

The applicants are to bear the following costs incidental to the placement of the child (effective February 2007)

- Adoption Application Fee--\$200.00 (non-refundable upon endorsement of the Adoption Application and Supporting Documents)
- Processing Fee--US\$2,000.00 for single placement. For sibling group of two or more, the processing fee will be pegged at US\$3,000.00
- Pre-travel Expenses-- The cost of the passport, visa, medical examination, psychological evaluation, travel expenses of the child within the Philippines and for abroad (the cost varies on a country to country basis)
- US\$1,000 Child Care Support Fund for the Child Caring Agencies

3. Is there a requirement to donate to the adoptive child's orphanages?

A Child Care Support Fund (CCSF) in the amount of US\$1,000 has been endorsed by the ICAB to be shared with the adoptive parents with the adoptive child's orphanage at the time of acceptance or fetching. The CCSF is in the form of an international money order or international bank draft payable to the orphanage which the ICAB forwards to the concerned orphanage of the child. This amount is not to be construed as payment for the child allocation but rather a support fund for the care of the children left behind in the institutions or orphanage.

4. If you adopt a sibling group, do you pay one processing fee, or one fee for each child?

Effective February 2007, the fees for sibling groups is US\$ 3,000.00 regardless of number of siblings.

5. What is the required age for the Adoptive Applicants?

It is a requirement in the Philippine Inter-Country Adoption Law that the adoptive applicants should be at least twenty-seven (27) years old and at least sixteen (16) years older than the child to be adopted at the time of application unless the adoptor is the parent by nature of the child to be adopted or the spouse of such parent. The maximum age gap between the child and prospective adoptive parents(particularly the female PAP) is 45 years.

6. Are there marital status requirements?

The applicants must be legally married for at least three (3) years. Single applicants are accepted for older children (6 years old & above) and children with special needs.

7. Will a health certificate be issued to the adopted child? If so what diseases will he or she be tested for? Will the child be subject to AIDS testing?

Generally, children cleared for inter-country adoption have been tested and also received immunizations against common childhood ailments while under the care and custody of Child Caring/Child Placing Agencies

(orphanages/institutions for children). However, children bound for inter-country adoption placement undergo visa medical examination or health examination prior to the issuance of their entry visa if this is an immigration requirement of the receiving country. To date, visa medical examinations include: blood testings, stool examination, urine test, skin test for allergies, Tuberculin test for Primary Complex or pulmonary Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B (if requested) and HIV

Filipino children are not subjected to AIDS tests unless there are factors (e.g. child's birthmother is a prostituted woman with multiple partners, drug user, etc.) that would logically require the AIDS test to be done because it will be in the child's best interests.

8. How long is the processing time?

Adoption applicants that have substantive Home Study Report (HSR) and complete supporting documents are reviewed and approved within one month from receipt of the adoption applicant/s' dossier. On the other hand, adoption application with lacking information and/or documents are reviewed and processed depending upon the submission/completion by the Central Authority/Foreign Adoption Agency (CA/FAA) of the requested information and/or documents with the corresponding delay in its approval.

The matching or child referral or allocation largely depends on the stated child preference (i.e. child's age, gender and state of health or extent of known background) of the Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs). This usually takes 1 to 2 years after the PAPs' approval. Willingness to accept a special needs child generally shortens the waiting period for child allocation

9. Is the adoption process transparent?

Yes, very transparent! The Central Authority representatives can come and visit the ICAB, may request the observation of the Matching Conference, have dialogues with the ICAB Secretariat Social Workers, may schedule visits to the different Child Caring/Placing Agencies or write, fax, email or courier us to Inquire, among others, on matters pertaining to Prospective adoptive Parents (PAPs) application, the child being proposed to the PAPs and other inter-country adoption concerns they wish to be clarified.

10. What are the legal guarantees of PAPs in the event the biological parents of the adopted Filipino child changes their mind about the adoption?

- The children placed for inter-country adoption are those who are either involuntary committed by virtue of a Regional Trial Court's/Family Court's Declaration of Abandonment (DA) or those who are voluntarily committed or relinquished by their biological parent/s and legal guardian by virtue of a Deed of Voluntary Commitment (DVC) made out to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Philippine Competent Authority on adoption.

- The Involuntary Commitment is a judicial process that terminates the parental authority of the biological parent/s or legal guardians.

- When a child has been voluntarily committed in writing by his/her biological parent/s or legal guardians to the custody of the DSWD or any licensed Child Caring/Child Placing Agency, the rights of his/her biological parent/s guardians or other custodian to exercise parental authority over him is severed. The biological parent/s guardian may petition for the restoration of their parental rights and authority over the child within six months after the surrender (DVC) and provided that the child has not left the country with the PAPs.

11. Is there a possibility that the Child will be taken away from the custody of the PAPs after the initial 6 months period?

The child may be taken away from the custody of the PAPs during the initial 6 months trial custody period if the CA/FAA finds that the child or the PAPs or both find/s the pre-adoptive relationship to be unsatisfactory or if the CA/FAA finds that the continued placement of the child is not in the child's best interest. Said relationship is suspended by the Board.

12. Are there many children available in the waiting child program and what are the circumstances?

We have a number of Special Needs Children- Special Home Finding of either sex or

- Older children whose age range is from 5 - 15 years old
- Children belonging to a sibling group of 3 or more
- Children found positive of Hepa B or HIV
- Children with minor medical conditions (cleft lip/palate, half or total blindness, hearing impaired, mild cerebral palsy, etc.) developmental delays (language/speech, motor skills, etc.)

13. How long is typical for waiting for this program?

Generally, all our waiting children have been cleared for inter-country adoption placement and once the FAA notifies the ICAB that a possible family is interested in a specific child/ren in the Special Needs Children - Special Home Findings program, such a case/s is/are put on hold. The ICAB allows the FAA to complete and endorse the dossier of the SHF adoption applicants within a 4 month period. The ICAB Secretariat Social Worker in charge of the SNC-SHF program is mandated by the Board to present the case within one week after receipt of the application if the endorsed dossier of the family has thorough and substantial information in the Home Study Report (HSR) and supporting documents are complete and likewise, the dossier of the child is complete and updated.

14. Can the Prospective Adoptive Parent apply directly with the ICAB? No. The application shall be filed and officially endorsed to the ICAB through the receiving Country's Central Authority, Government Adoption Agency or ICAB's accredited Foreign Adoption Agency in the place of residence of the applicant couple.

15. Can we pay the ICAB's fee in personal checks or cash? No, personal checks, travelers check or cash are not accepted. All payments or remittances of fees and other charges shall be in US Dollars and in the form of company check or international money order or international bank draft made payable to the ICAB.

16. How do foreign adoption agencies prepare prospective adoptive parents? Most adoption applicants learn about adoption agencies through families who have adopted, through their own family, friends at works, in church, in the community or through the internet. The prospective adoptive applicant touches base with the identified adoption agency for their orientation/counseling on the requirements to be adoptive parents. Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs) must attend a series of meetings or sessions that enable them to determine and discern if adoption can be their choice of building their family especially for childless couples where inevitably, the issue of infertility must be resolved. Once the choice is made, discerning from which country they would like to adopt requires another series of learning sessions. Once a formal adoption application for the Philippine Inter-country Adoption Program is approved by the adoption agency and endorsed to the ICAB, the PAPA are walked through the different stages of the adoption process from the time of application up to securing of the child's Adoption Decree/Citizenship and on to the post adoption stage (e.g. Motherland Tour, Search for Roots, Reunion, etc.).

17. Can the Prospective Adoptive Parent choose a particular/specific child to be adopted? No matching arrangement shall be made between the applicant and the child's parent/guardians or custodians nor shall any contact between them concerning a particular child to be done before the matching proposal of the Committee has been approved by the Board. There are to date only two (2) situations where the desire of the PAPs to adopt (a) particular pre-identified child/ren can be processed: a. Relative adoption within the 4th degree of consanguinity b. Special Needs Children for Special Home Finding (SNC-SHF) inclusive of a Medical Mission child who has been hosted by a family.

18. How does ICAB assist the adoptive parents and adoptee in the post adoption life? The ICAB has established a post adoption service in cooperation with the local Child Caring Agencies and the Central Authorities/Foreign Adoption Agencies or Government Adoption Agencies. This program enables the exchange of communications/photos between and among, the adoption triad members as well as facilitate the returning adopted child/ren and their adoptive parents visiting the country of birth of the adoptee (Motherland Tour), looking into the child's records, visiting the Child Caring Agency where the adoptee came from, tracing or even seeking a reunion with birthparent/family.

19. What is the procedure for the post legal adoption service? The ICAB requires that the Central Authority/Foreign Adoption Agency request in writing for the availment of post adoption service in behalf of the adopted child/ren and their respective adoptive parents. If it is the birth family (birthmother, birthparents, etc.) who wishes to touch base with their erstwhile child/ren, the concerned DSWD-Field Office Regional Director request for such service on behalf of the birthfamily. The Post Legal Adoption Assistance/Motherland Tour/Search for Roots entails one to 12 months of coordination (through phone, fax, e-mail, letter writing and even very discreet tri-media announcements) between the ICAB, local partners (DSWD or Child Caring Agency) and the Central Authority/Foreign Adoption Agency (CA/FAA).

20. What is Motherland Tour? The ICAB suggests to the FAA some scenic, historic and meaningful places which are represents of the Philippines and which is safe and secure enough to visit. The ICAB also coordinates with the local CCA for the schedule of the Motherland Tour, retrieval of the child's files and visitation. The ICAB coordinates and apprises, in writing, the CA/FAA/GAA on the status of the "Motherland Tour", schedules of meetings and itinerary of visitations. The ICAB prepares a cultural program for the Motherland Tour group during their visit to the ICAB office where they meet the Board, the ICPC and the Secretariat members and testimonies on how they were before and how they are now as adoptees/as adoptive family are shared.

21. Does ICAB undertake search and reunion? The letter received from the CA/FAA/GAA may include a request for the tracing of birthparent/family and reunion. In such cases, the ICAB retrieves family/legal and/or medical documents and schedules meeting and visitations to orphanages/institutions. In the meantime, it is obligatory that the searchee (be he/she a minor or not) and the adoptive family of the minor undergo counseling first and this should be ascertained by the FAA who processed the adoption with a confirmation letter attesting to such counseling sent to the Board. The ICAB

Lead Person/Social Worker on Post Legal Adoption Services coordinates with the Records Section of the ICAB as well as with the parent agency – the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) for the retrieval and review of the child’s/ren’s closed/archived files/records not only to cull out significant information on the birthparent/family but to make these files accessible to the searchee.

Once the birthparents and family have been located, counseling is extended to determine the level of resolution by the birthparents of their guilt/anxiety/apprehension over giving up their child for adoption, current circumstances, understanding of the post adoption reunion, clarifications of expectations and preparation of the birthparent/s for the possible reunion. (The setting up of a reunion depends on the willingness and preparedness of both the birthparent/s and his/her family and the searchee/s and his/her adoptive parents, if the adoptee is a minor).

A reunion between the returning adopted child/ren and the traced birthparent/s is held under the supervision of a Board Member, the Executive Director and the ICAB Lead Person.