

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

1. Do we have to live in Kelowna to complete a Home Study?

No. The Adoption Centre of British Columbia works with prospective adoptive families (and birth parents) throughout the province of British Columbia. We have social workers with whom we contract located in virtually every area of the province to complete home studies and birthparent counselling.

2. Can I set up an information session to discuss further even if I don't live in Kelowna?

Definitely! We work with prospective adoptive parents throughout the province of BC! We would be happy to schedule face to face meetings with those who can travel to our office. However, we understand that this is not always possible. In those cases, we are able to schedule telephone meetings where you can speak to one of our social workers from the luxury of your home or office. We also have information sessions in various communities which you can register to attend.

3. What is a Home Study and how long does it take?

Home studies generally take approximately 3-4 months to complete. A home study involves a social worker sitting down with you (and your children if you are parenting) in a series of discussions to learn more about you and to provide education about adopting. In addition to face to face meetings, you will need to fill out information about yourself through a series of written questionnaires. You will also be required to complete: Criminal Records Checks, Medical Reports, Prior Contact Check with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, and several personal references. At the end of this process, your social worker will write up a report for you to view which outlines information about you as well as the type of child you have been approved to adopt (i.e.: age, gender, special needs/risk factors).

4. How much does adoption cost?

The costs involved in adopting depend on the type of adoption you are interested in pursuing. While we are a fee for service agency, we also operate as a not for profit. This means that all fees charged are to support our operating costs only. We have tried to be as comprehensive as possible in our fee schedules so that families know what to expect. We would be happy to explain any of our fees to you.

While adoption may seem costly for some families, it is important to be aware that some lending institutions will consider adoption loans. In addition, it is helpful for families to know that some of the costs associated with adoption are tax deductible. Please check with *Canada Revenue Agency* for more information on this.

5. What types of adoption are there?

Basically, there are three types of adoptions in the province of British Columbia: “Domestic”, “Inter-country” and “Ministry”. For all three, the first step is to have a home study completed. The home study is the process by which you become approved to adopt.

A “Domestic” adoption involves adopting a low risk newborn infant within the province of British Columbia. Once approved, the prospective adoptive parents compile a profile containing a non-identifying copy of their home study, a Dear Birth Parent Letter and photos. When birth parents approach our agency to make an adoption plan, they are able to view these profiles in order to choose a family for their child. Because birth parents are the ones who choose the adoptive family, there is no way to predict how long prospective adoptive parents might wait.

The Adoption Centre of British Columbia works with birth parents throughout the province of British Columbia.

An “Inter-Country” adoption involves adopting a child from another country other than Canada. We facilitate adoptions from China, Haiti, Ethiopia, Bulgaria, and United States.

Generally speaking, once approved, the prospective adoptive parents would collect additional documents required by the child’s country of origin to include in their adoption dossier. *The Adoption Centre of British Columbia* ensures that the dossier is prepared in accordance with the country’s preferences and then forwards the dossier to the country’s adoption officials. From this point, we work together with the child’s country of origin to ensure that all requirements of the British Columbia *Adoption Act* have been satisfied throughout each stage of the adoption process. Each country develops their own process by which to facilitate adoptions and the process can vary in terms of requirements, process and time frames.

A “Ministry” adoption involves the adoption of a child from within British Columbia ('BC's Waiting Children'). Children are generally older than 2 years of age, reside in foster homes and are legally available for adoption. Within BC, there are approximately 1300 children available for adoption and in need of adoptive families.

6. Can I adopt from other provinces in Canada from BC?

This only occurs when the adoptive parents and the birth parents know each other. Each province in Canada has its own separate adoption legislation. As a result, circumstances can vary widely. For this reason, it would be important to discuss this situation with a social worker directly to determine how to proceed if you had any questions in this regard.

7. What is Openness?

“Openness” refers to a continuum of possible contact between the adoptive parents and the birth family and/or other people to whom the child is attached after the child is placed with the adoptive parents. On one side of the continuum there would be non-identifying contact and an agreement (usually written) to send certain information to each other at certain times through *The Adoption Centre of British Columbia* which would act as a forwarding mailbox. On the other end of the continuum there would be identifying contact whereby the adoptive parents and birth parents would

communicate directly with each other. Contact can involve phone calls, letters, photos, videos, emails and/or visits or a combination thereof. During the home study process, your social worker will discuss this concept with you to provide education and to determine your comfort level. Your preferences with regard to openness will be reflected in your home study write up for birth parents to view.

8. What is a facilitator and can I work without one?

Facilitators may be individuals or agencies. They assist with inter-country adoptions only. They are permitted to charge fees for their services, but the fee must be collected through the licensed adoption agency.

Agencies and Facilitators do not duplicate their services. They have distinct roles, but work cooperatively together. Facilitators' functions vary but generally they arrange for translation and authentication of documents, translation of medical and social histories received from the child's country, transportation and accommodation arrangements in the child's country as well as assistance in obtaining your adoption order if it is being granted in the child's country. While it is possible to work without a facilitator, it is not recommended especially if the prospective adoptive parents are not fluent in the local language of the country they are adopting from. Such tasks are best performed by people with expertise in the procedures specific to the child's country and who are fluent in the local language.