

Center for Adoption Policy

www.adoptionpolicy.org

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What To Do Before Selecting an International Adoption Program and Agency

CAP is not engaged in the placement of children. However, in response to many questions we have received regarding the Intercountry Adoption Process, we suggest the following steps to get you started:

RESEARCH

1. Decide on a Country

-Compare Various Country Programs-look at what gender/child age is your ideal and see if the country will accommodate it. Scrutinize restrictions on parent age, marital status, medical history etc. Establish whether the restrictions are set by the sending country or the agency in question. The former cannot be overridden.

-Compare costs, time frames, longevity and reliability of programs

2. Compare agencies: Country Programs should be comparable across agencies—if an agency promises more than all the others, be very skeptical: if the deal seems too good to be true, it usually is.

- ask parents who have adopted for recommendations. Try to obtain recent references. Ask adoptive parents: what is the one thing they wish they had known before going with the agency. Also ask, among other questions, how much time potential adoptive parents are given to consider a referral and if there was pressure placed on the adoptive parents to accept a referral quickly.

3. Call or meet with agencies and talk to their program directors. If they are not responsive to your questions or do not return telephone calls or emails promptly, eliminate them. You need an agency that will get back to you and address your concerns in a timely fashion as you will rely completely on your agency both in the U.S. and in country.

4. Decide between one country agencies and multi-country agencies— breadth vs. depth.
5. Decide between non-special needs and waiting children (see separate CAP memorandum on latter).

VERIFY

Use Government and Accreditation Resources:

U.S. State Department

[http:// http://adoption.state.gov/](http://http://adoption.state.gov/)

Council on Accreditation

<http://www.coanet.org/front3/page.cfm?sect=54&cont=4203>

REMEMBER:

No intermediary can GUARANTEE the placement of any child, much less a specific child. Intercountry adoption programs involve decisions made by foreign governments and judiciary systems. They are subject to change at any time, from the sending country's decisions, from US and other receiving government decisions, from international issues unrelated to adoption. Be prepared for time frames to change and additional expenditures to occur.

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