

ADOPTION FAQs

1. What are the different types of adoption in Alberta?

Adoptions in Alberta can fall into the following categories:

- Step parent, when a spouse wants to adopt your child;
- Private Direct, when birth parents choose someone who is known to them to permanently care for their child;
- International, when a child is born outside of Canada (can be relative or non-related);
- Children and Family Services adoptions, when the child is under a Permanent Guardianship Order; and
- Private agency/Domestic adoptions, when a family applies through a private agency and is chosen by a birth family

More info on the various types can be found here: [Adoption | Alberta.ca](https://www.adoption.alberta.ca)

2. Who is eligible to apply for adoption in Alberta?

Adoption is a provincially regulated program. Alberta's [Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act](#) indicates that, in order for an applicant to be eligible to apply for adoption in Alberta, they must be a resident of Alberta at the time of application, approval and placement. They also must be over 18 years of age to apply. Prospective adoptive applicants are screened, trained and assessed by completing a home study with a social worker to ensure that they are a safe and competent family for a child, as well as to appropriately match the needs of a child to the capacities of the families.

3. I am expecting and want to know my options, what are my next steps?

In Alberta, there are three private adoption agencies who can counsel you on your options and support you through the process. There is no judgment and no pressure, always keeping you and your child's best interest in mind. Should you decide to place your child for adoption, you are able to select the adoptive family and establish an open relationship with them and your child throughout that child's lifetime.

4. What is open adoption?

Research and feedback from adult adoptees has shown that individuals who are adopted have much better psychosocial outcomes and identity formation when they

were placed in an open adoption versus a semi-closed or closed adoption. What this means is that the biological family and adoptive family have an ongoing connection and relationship throughout the lifetime of the adopted child. This can look very different, depending on the desire of the birth family and geographical limitations, but can be regular updates via email or teleconference all the way to regular in person visits that support the child's understanding of who they are and build a relationship with their biological family.

5. What types of children are currently waiting to be adopted?

The majority of children waiting for an adoptive family are older children (7+), sibling groups of three or more, and children with special needs.

6. What is the average wait time for an adoption?

Wait times can vary depending on where you are adopting from and what you are open to. As indicated, there is a bigger need for families to adopt children that are older, sibling groups, or with special needs, so those wait times would be less. For a domestic adoption of what would be considered a healthy baby, the average wait time is between 2-4 years. For an international adoption, the average wait time is 3-6 years, but some countries have stipulations on what children you are able to adopt.

7. If there are children in need of adoption, why are the wait times so long?

There are currently many families in Alberta that are waiting to adopt, but the majority of them are hoping to be placed with a healthy newborn. In contrast, the children waiting to be adopted tend to be older, sibling groups, and children with special needs. In an international adoption, diligent processes need to be followed to ensure that those children are legitimately in need of adoption and that all ethical and legislative guidelines for both adoption and immigration have been adhered to.

8. What are the average costs for adoption?

All birth family services through private adoption agencies are free for the family. Adoption through Children and Family Services is at no cost to the applicants as it is all covered. A private domestic adoption generally costs between \$15,000-\$20,000. International adoptions generally cost between \$30,000-\$75,000.

9. Why does it cost so much to adopt?

Although all of the private adoption agencies in Alberta are non-profit, there are significant costs incurred for the process, including all of the screening, training and assessing of the prospective adoptive parents, counseling of the birth families (many of whom may choose not to place), legal fees, ongoing support, and post placement services. In international adoptions, the majority of the fees do not go to the local agency, as there are often other coordinating agencies involved, legal fees, travel and accommodation in the child's country.

10. We are not the biological parents of the children in our care, but we are legal guardians. can we still consider an adoption for the children?

Yes, as long as you are the legal guardians (with paperwork), then you are able to consider an adoption plan for those children.

11. Can private adoption agencies work with Children and Family Services?

Yes, they regularly collaborate to ensure that children find permanency through the most appropriate and timely route. Always keeping the best interest of the child in mind.

12. What is a private direct adoption?

In Alberta, guardians are able to make an adoption plan for a direct placement with a relative, step parent, or individuals that are known to them. Please be aware that no third party (other than a licensed adoption agency) may make introductions or facilitate a private direct placement. In a private direct, the individuals involved may file their own court paperwork, or they may use the help of an adoption agency to complete the paperwork and receive counseling.

13. I am not in a place to adopt, but what else can I do to help?

There are many ways you can support other adoptive families or children with limited support networks. One way is to connect with an adoptive, kinship or foster family and drop off meals, offer respite, help with appointments, clean their house, drop off gift cards, or just generally show up for them. One way you can help children at risk is by signing up for mentoring programs, sponsoring them for an activity or therapeutic intervention, and supporting their existing caregivers.

Another way you can help is by donating through one of the private adoption agencies. Your donations will go a long way towards supporting families, providing ongoing care and counseling, and ensuring that every child is placed in a loving home.