Information Sheet
Requirements for a General Adoption Application Process

Overview

Individuals who wish to apply to adopt children who are in the care and custody of Alberta Children’s Services, and with whom they do not have a pre-existing relationship, must be willing to accommodate the special needs and backgrounds that these children may have. You must be willing to maintain the child’s culture, relationships and connections to family, community, and significant others. You must meet all requirements in order to be approved for adoption through Alberta Children’s Services.

If you do not meet all the requirements for adoption through Alberta Children’s Services you may wish to consider adopting through an Alberta Licensed agency or through the International Adoption Program.

Criteria to Apply

All applications are reviewed to ensure that the applicant:

- resides in Alberta;
- is at least 18 years old;
- demonstrates financial and domestic stability;
- appears to be physically and mentally capable of parenting an adoptive child, and
- understands that when a child is placed in their home, a former guardian may apply to review the child’s permanent guardianship order. Therefore acceptance of legal risk is mandatory;
- understands that most children available for adoption are between the ages of 10 and 17 years old;
- understands that children have important existing relationships and connections to family,
- community and natural support network that need to continue into adoption;
- understands the importance of a child’s culture and is prepared to make a commitment to ensuring that cultural contacts are maintained and facilitated;

Please Note:

- Applicants must understand that very few young children are available for adoption, and that applications restricted to children aged 0-5 years will not be accepted.

If you are accepting of ONE of the following child-related criteria, your home assessment process will begin immediately:

- Significantly cognitively delayed (dependency in adulthood anticipated)
- Diagnosis of Autism
- Diagnosis of Schizophrenia
- Limited life span
- Serious and chronic medical condition (e.g. Cystic Fibrosis, Hepatitis C positive, Muscular Dystrophy, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Spina Bifida, HIV positive)
- Profound multiple handicaps
- Serious and chronic medical conditions requiring intensive and ongoing medical intervention. These conditions include, but are not limited to, Cystic Fibrosis, Hepatitis C, Muscular Dystrophy, Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, HIV positive and Epilepsy.
- Profound multiple disabilities (dependency in adulthood anticipated)

If you are not accepting of one of the above criteria, you MUST be accepting of:

- Confirmed maternal history of alcohol use in pregnancy, and/or
- Confirmed maternal history of drug use in pregnancy.
Criteria to Apply (continued)

In addition, you must be accepting of TWO of the following special needs:

- Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) diagnosis
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) or Conduct Disorder diagnosis
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnosis
- History of sexually inappropriate/acting out behaviour
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
- Fetal Drug Effect (FDE)
- Global developmental delays (delays in three or more areas of development)
- Deaf and/or blind
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnosis
- Down Syndrome
- Learning disability/special education
- Child 10 years and older
- Sibling group of three or more

And also be accepting of TWO of the following:

- Accepting of in-person contact with birth parents
- Globally delayed/cognitively delayed birth parents
- Birth parent(s) with psychiatric diagnosis
- Inheritable diseases

If you meet the above criteria, contact the Children’s Services adoption office in your area to complete the application form and start your adoption journey.

Information Sessions

The Children’s Services adoption office in your area, they will tell you when the next sessions are being presented in your region.

At the sessions you will receive:

- Information regarding special needs adoption;
- A thorough explanation of the Criteria to apply for adoption;
- Information about Orientation to Caregiver Training (OCT), which is mandatory and must be completed as part of the approval process;
- Information about time frames from application to approval; and
- Information about the licensed agency and international adoption programs, if you determine you are not interested in adopting a child through the Ministry or do not meet the Criteria to Apply for Adoption.

Contact

For more information, you may contact Adoption Services by email at: CS.AdoptionServices@gov.ab.ca.