

Travelling With Children

[Travel.gc.ca/child](#)



When travelling abroad with children, keep this important advice in mind to ensure a safe and successful trip.

We strongly recommend that Canadian children carry a consent letter ([travel.gc.ca/letter](#)) if they are travelling abroad alone, with only one parent/guardian, with friends or relatives or with a group. A consent letter may be requested by immigration authorities when entering or leaving a foreign country or by Canadian officials when re-entering Canada. Failure to produce a letter upon request may result in delays or refusal to enter or exit a country. We also recommend that the letter be:

- signed by every non-accompanying person or organization with the legal right to make major decisions for the child, including anyone with custody rights, guardianship rights or parental authority (in Quebec only);
- signed by any non-accompanying parent who has access to the child; and
- certified by an official who has the authority to administer an oath or solemn declaration (e.g. a commissioner of oaths, notary public or lawyer), so that border officials will be less likely to question its authenticity.

We advise that all children carry a valid Canadian passport when travelling abroad, even to enter the United States by land or

Did you know...?

In Canada, a child is defined as anyone under the age of majority (18 or 19, depending on the province or territory of residence).

water. All children, including infants and newborns, need their own passport. Make sure you and/or the child also carry supporting identification, such as a birth certificate or Certificate of Canadian Citizenship, divorce papers, custody court orders or a death certificate (if one or both parents are deceased). These documents will help prove your citizenship, residency and custodial rights when returning to Canada. Check with the destination country's embassy or consulate in Canada regarding additional documentation that may be required.

Keep some form of identification in your child's pocket in case you are separated.

Carry recent photographs of the child for emergency identification purposes.

Seek advice from a lawyer if you are involved in a custody dispute or if one might develop while the child is abroad. If you already have a custody order or agreement, confirm that it permits the child to travel internationally. If you travel abroad with the child without the legal right to do so, you could be accused of parental child abduction and be subject to legal action. Understand that Canadian custody orders are not usually recognized or enforceable in other countries. If you have questions about the destination country's rules and practices, consult with the nearest embassy or consulate of that country before leaving Canada.

Did you know...?

All children under the age of 16 now receive ePassports that are valid for a maximum of five years.

Contact the airline, bus, train or other transport company

you will be using to check its policies and regulations for child travellers. If the child will be travelling unaccompanied, note that some airlines require a parent or guardian to stay at the airport until the flight has departed. The person greeting the child at the point of arrival may need appropriate identification and authorization.

If you will be pregnant while abroad or expect to give birth in a foreign country,

be sure to see your doctor before leaving Canada. Make sure your supplementary health insurance covers pregnancy-related conditions, pre-term and full-term birth and neonatal care. Try to avoid malarial zones, as expectant mothers are particularly vulnerable to the illness, which could put their pregnancy at risk. If you plan to give birth outside Canada, identify beforehand a local hospital or birthing facility that meets your standards.

Did you know...?

Some airlines will escort and supervise an unaccompanied child (usually from five to 12 years of age) from check-in through arrival.

Did you know...?

Proof of the citizenship of a Canadian baby born abroad is required to obtain a passport. Contact the nearest Canadian embassy or consulate abroad to apply for a Certificate of Canadian Citizenship and a passport for your child.

Consult with your health care provider on how best to protect your child's health while travelling, preferably six weeks before leaving Canada. International travel can expose infants and small children to infectious diseases not frequently seen in Canada. You may need to arrange an alternative or accelerated childhood immunization schedule for them. Research medical facilities available in your destination country.

Arrange for appropriate daycare or schooling if you plan to live abroad with your children.

Make sure you are satisfied with the standards of daycare offered in your destination country. Contact the country's educational authorities for information about the school system. Have copies of your children's school records in case they are needed.

Did you know...?

In addition to public and private schools, most countries have international schools, attended mainly by expatriate children.

For further information about children and travel, visit [travel.gc.ca/child](#). Or contact us by telephone (1-800-267-6788 or 613-944-6788), TTY (1-800-394-3472 or 613-944-1310) or email ([travel@international.gc.ca](#)).