

# Adoption in Saskatchewan

In Saskatchewan, there are several types of adoption, including Domestic Adoption, Intercountry Adoption, Independent Adoption, Adult Adoption and Stepparent Adoption.

All adoption processes are governed by *The Adoption Act, 1998*, *The Adoption Regulations (2003)*, *The Child and Family Services Act*, and *The Intercountry Adoption (Hague Convention) Implementation Act*. This legislation is accessible through the Queen's Printer at [www.qp.gov.sk.ca](http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca).

## Domestic Adoption

The Domestic Adoption Program, which is offered through the Ministry of Social Services, involves the adoption of children under the permanent, legal guardianship of the Minister. The Minister becomes legal guardian when a birth parent enters into an agreement with the Ministry through a Voluntary Committal process, or when a Permanent Order is obtained through a court process.

The majority of children who come into care of the Minister are reunited with family or individuals meaningful to them. A small number become permanently in care of the Minister and eligible to be adopted after all options with biological and extended family have been explored.

## Needs of Children Available for Adoption

Children whose permanency plan includes adoption may experience good health and well being, while others may have a variety of needs or conditions that impact their development. Support needs may be

associated with, but not limited to:

- limited birth parent or family history;
- traumatic experiences;
- diagnosed/undiagnosed emotional or behavioural problems;
- unknown predisposition to certain genetic factors;
- developmental or cognitive delay;
- physical disability;
- prenatal exposure to substances; and
- medical health problems.

Children may also have backgrounds with child welfare involvement that include one or more of following:

- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Multiple Placements

## Adoptive Families

Adoptive families provide a home and family for a child who requires permanence. Adoptive families need to:

- include the child in the family;
- help the child maintain family and cultural ties;
- adapt and commit to the needs of the child; and
- support the child's life-long educational, medical, behavioural, emotional, cultural and spiritual needs.

## Open Adoption

Openness refers to maintaining contact with the child's birth family or other meaningful individuals after the adoption takes place. Among other

benefits, openness allows:

- Birth families to receive information about the health and well-being of the child;
- Adoptive families to maintain a link to the child's culture and heritage; and
- Adoptees to strengthen their identity as a child and later as an adult.

Openness can vary from exchange of non-identifying information to full disclosure including contact with the child.

## Adoption Assistance

The Ministry provides financial assistance and support through the Assisted Adoption Program, which applies to children who were formerly in permanent care of the Minister. Supports are provided for children who may have a physical, emotional, cognitive or mental delay or disability, or predisposition to a condition that may impact future growth or development.

Financial assistance through the Assisted Adoption Program includes:

1. monthly maintenance;
2. special needs benefits based on an approved case plan; and
3. Supplementary Health Program benefits.

Support needs are reviewed with the adoptive family at the time of the adoption, as well as through an annual review.

## To Become an Adoptive Parent

You may be:

- single, married or living common-law;
- of any race or ethnicity; or
- with or without children of your own.

You must be:

- at least 18 years of age;
- willing to participate in Parent Resources for Information, Development & Education (PRIDE) Pre-service Training and the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Culture Component; and
- willing to participate in the completion of a Mutual Family Assessment with a Ministry Adoption Worker, which includes a Criminal Record and Child Welfare Background Check.

The steps to becoming an adoptive parent include:

1. Consultation with the Adoption Support Centre of Saskatchewan (ASCS) in completing a pre-referral education process;
2. Attending an intake with a Ministry caseworker and completing the application process; and
3. Attending PRIDE Pre-service Training.

The length of time it takes to adopt a child varies. Applicants willing to support older children, sibling groups or children with complex needs tend to complete the steps required to adopt much sooner. Aboriginal or Métis families interested in adoption are prioritized as there is an ongoing need for Aboriginal and Métis resource families.

### Parent Resources for Information, Development & Education (PRIDE) Pre-service Training and the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Culture Component

PRIDE is a competency-based model of practice implemented by the Ministry of Social Services to

support the development of foster and adoptive families. The following five competencies form the foundation of the PRIDE model, and are fundamental to achieving the goals of the program:

1. Protecting and nurturing children;
2. Meeting children's developmental needs and addressing developmental delay;
3. Supporting relationships between children and their families;
4. Connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime; and
5. Working as a member of a professional team.

PRIDE Pre-service Training consists of nine sessions that total 27 hours, and is combined with a series of in-home consultation meetings. Through this, the five competency categories are assessed by the prospective adoptive applicants, the PRIDE trainers and the Adoption Worker.

The Saskatchewan Aboriginal Culture Component consists of three hours of instruction that highlights the importance of maintaining ties to family and culture.

## Intercountry Adoption

Intercountry Adoption refers to the adoption of a child who resides outside Canada. Applicants work with a Ministry-approved Independent Practitioner to complete their homestudy, and may be required to work with an out-of-province agency through the child matching and adoption phase. The Ministry agrees to the placement of the child, and ensures all legal requirements for an Intercountry Adoption are met. For information, refer to the *Intercountry Adoption Program Guide*, available through the Government of Saskatchewan Website at: [www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca/intercountry-adoption.pdf](http://www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca/intercountry-adoption.pdf). All costs related to this type of adoption are the responsibility of the applicants.

## Independent Adoption

Birth parents may make arrangements with someone they know to adopt their child. A Ministry-approved Independent Practitioner completes the home study, while a lawyer retained by the adoptive family assists with processing the adoption through court. The Ministry becomes involved by completing the Certificate of Counseling and Certificate of Independent Advice with the birth parents. All costs related to this type of adoption are the responsibility of the applicants.

## Adult Adoption

Individuals 18 years of age or older may be adopted if they consent and the court considers the reason for the adoption acceptable. Adult adoptions do not require a home study, and are processed with the assistance of a lawyer. All costs related to this type of adoption are the responsibility of the applicants.

## Stepparent Adoption

An individual may, with the consent of his or her spouse or partner, apply to the court to adopt a child of that spouse or partner. Children who are 12 years of age or older must consent to this type of adoption. Stepparent adoptions do not require a home study, unless ordered by the court, and are processed with the assistance of a lawyer. All costs related to this type of adoption are the responsibility of the applicants.

## For Further Information

For questions about adoption services in the province, contact the Adoption Support Centre of Saskatchewan. Visit their website at [www.adoptionsask.org](http://www.adoptionsask.org), or call toll-free 1-866-869-2727.

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