

Travelling With Children

Parents who travel with children, from babies to teenagers, know that travelling is a process! You must lug everything along – from teddy bears, diaper bags and car seats to cellphones and backpacks.

Did you know there are legal requirements if you travel outside of Canada with children?

Passports

Children need their own passport to travel outside of Canada, including newborn babies. Children cannot travel using their parent's passport. If you are traveling within Canada, you may need to show identification for the child, such as a birth certificate, and proof of your relationship with the child, such as a guardianship order or parenting order.

The following people can apply for a child's passport:

- Parents (both parents should sign unless a court order says otherwise or one parent is deceased)
- Legal guardian (must provide proof of legal guardianship, such as a court order)
- Divorced parent with decision-making responsibility. You must provide a copy of the divorce judgment or order. You must also provide documents that show you have decision-making responsibility.

All the child's guardians must sign the application for the child's passport. If a guardian refuses or cannot be contacted, you can ask a judge for an order allowing you to sign the application alone.



Never use whiteout on a passport. If there is no room to write the new information in the space above, write out the emergency contact information on a separate piece of paper and insert it into your child's passport.

You must submit the following documents when applying for your child's passport:

- Application form
- Two identical photographs
- Proof of your child's Canadian citizenship (such as a birth certificate or Canadian citizenship certificate)
- Proof of parentage (such as a long-form birth certificate, a court-issued adoption order or a foreign birth certificate with the names of the parents)
- Proof of custody, separation or divorce (if applicable)

All children must have a photograph in their passport.

The photo requirements are the same for a child as they are for an adult. The photo must be recent (within 6 months before you submit the application). You must get two identical photos. The photographer must stamp the back of one with the date and studio info and then a guarantor must sign it.

Do not sign your child's passport.

Your signature on your child's passport makes the document invalid. The signature block can be blank if your child is under 16 years of age. Children under 11 can sign their passport. Children between 11 and 15 should sign their passport. Children 16 and older must sign their passport.

Fill out the emergency contact section of your child's passport.

The emergency contact should be a person who is unlikely to travel with the child. You should update the emergency contact if the person or their address changes.

Passports for children under 16 are only valid for up to 5 years.

You cannot renew your child's passport. You have to apply for a new one.

Travelling Without the Other Parent or Guardian

If you are the parent travelling with the children:

1. Take the necessary documents with you. These include:
 - child's passport
 - child's long-form birth certificate
 - letter of consent from the parents or guardians who are not travelling
 - death certificate, if other parent or guardian is deceased
 - adoption order, if applicable
 - court order allowing travel, if other parents or guardians do not consent to the travel and a judge allows you to travel with the child
2. Check with the airline to see what documents they need.
3. Contact the embassy or consulate of the countries where you will be visiting and ask about their entry requirements.
4. Review Canada's Travel Advice and Advisories webpage: <http://bit.ly/3cChAHn>

Consent Letters

You should take a consent letter with you even though it is not a legal requirement in Canada. It can make travelling easier as foreign immigration authorities in other countries may ask for it when you enter or leave their country. Canadian officials may also ask for it when you return to Canada. The letter confirms that Canadian children have permission to travel abroad from parents or guardians who are not travelling with them.

Everyone who has a legal right to make major decisions for the child but who is not travelling with the child should sign the letter. The Government of Canada recommends that you have the letter witnessed by a Notary Public so that border officials will be less likely to question whether the letter is real or not.



You can find more information and a consent form template on the Government of Canada's website:
<http://bit.ly/3q0I8FS>

Ask the other guardians to sign a consent letter. If a guardian refuses to sign a consent letter, you can ask a judge for an order allowing you to travel with the child. The judge will ask for a copy of your travel itinerary and will consider if travel is in the best interests of the child.

If you are the parent staying home:

- **If you think that the other guardian will not return the children to you, get legal help immediately.** In an emergency, you can apply to the court to have the children's passports taken away from the other guardian. You can make an application to the court without notice to the other side.
- If you are worried about an international abduction, you should contact a lawyer immediately. The Government of Canada has more information on international child abductions on its website: <http://bit.ly/2NXg08y>

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