

Cambodia Adoption Consultation Program

An Introduction



NIGHTLIGHT[®]
CHRISTIAN ADOPTIONS

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For more information on Nightlight's International Adoption Programs,
visit our website:

www.Nightlight.org

Nightlight Christian Adoptions provides nationwide adoption and adoption consulting services.

Nightlight has offices in:

Anaheim Hills, California
Greenville, South Carolina

ADOPTING FROM CAMBODIA

Some Advantages of Adopting from Cambodia

1. Healthy young children are available for adoption – mainly boys.
2. Sibling groups are very rarely available.
3. Only one spouse needs to travel.
4. The fees for the program are low, and Nightlight works hard to keep expenses associated with the adoption down as well.
5. Except for your hotel and meals in Cambodia and some travel by car, there are few other expenses while in the country.
6. Completing the dossier is relatively simple; the documents only need to be notarized.
7. The children are well cared for in the orphanage in Cambodia.

Important Adoption Terms

If you have experience in adoption, the parlance is probably familiar to you and needs no explaining. However, for the first-time adoptive parent, adoption language can be bewildering. Here are a few basic terms to get you started:

Home Study

The *home study* is a document prepared by a licensed social worker where you live. You will need to find a licensed social worker to conduct your home study. Be sure to talk with several agencies and social workers when looking for someone to conduct your home study; fees can vary greatly. In some countries, the home study must be conducted by a government agency.

The purpose of the home study is to give interested parties (your government's authority and the Cambodian government) an accurate picture of your whole family. The study is conducted as a series of visits scheduled about a week apart. The adoptive parents are interviewed both as a couple and individually.

Many potential adoptive parents feel an unnecessary measure of stress about having a home study done. Don't worry that your house must pass the "white glove inspection" or that you have to be perfect people in order to have a successful home study. Your social worker will mainly be interested in observing the dynamics of your relationship as a couple to see how you will handle the responsibilities of parenting. It is true that many personal questions are asked during the

course of a home study. However, the social worker's goal is to assist you in becoming a parent, *not* to discover your hidden flaws and expose them to the world.

Government Approval

You must obtain approval from your government before you can adopt in Cambodia. The organization that provides this approval varies by country. Often it will be the agency that issues visas to immigrants.

Dossier

The *dossier* is the centerpiece of your Cambodian adoption. It is a collection of official documents about you, your spouse, and any minor children living with you. The purpose of the dossier is to paint an accurate picture of who you are for the Cambodian government. Your Cambodian adoption cannot be finalized until your dossier is complete. However, your dossier *can be completed before you receive approval from your country to adopt*. So start work on your dossier as soon as possible. Take the time to assemble yours correctly. We are here to help you.

Time frame for Cambodian Adoption

Once your paperwork is in Cambodia and you have been referred a child (see below, "How Is a Child Assigned?"), it takes just 1 to 3 months for your adoption to be ready to complete. Before the paperwork is processed, you will need to submit a letter to the Ministry of Social Affairs in Cambodia expressing your commitment to accept the referred child and your commitment to adopt said child. After your final commitment is accepted by the Ministry of Social Affairs, you can fly to Cambodia to finalize your adoption.

The best way to approach your Cambodian adoption is one step at a time. Your adoption may take as little as 6 months from the time you begin, but it will likely take longer. The more quickly you can assemble your dossier correctly, the more quickly your adoption will move. At times, you may be filled with nervous energy; focus that energy on doing paperwork and other adoption-related jobs.

To ensure that your adoption is completed in the timeliest fashion possible, make use of the following timetable for performing necessary tasks. Tasks are listed in the order in which they should be performed.

1. Determine whether you can adopt from Cambodia by providing two letters from your government: One stating that your family is approved to adopt from overseas and another stating that the child to be adopted will be granted immigrant status after the adoption is complete in whatever country you desire the child to have citizenship. These letters must be sealed by either your country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Embassy.
2. Fill out the application for Nightlight Christian Adoptions and submit it to our office at

1527 Wade Hampton Blvd
Greenville, South Carolina 29609

3. Begin assembling your dossier. The section on completing the Cambodian dossier will be sent to you.
4. Initiate your home study. (Some families must begin the home study process in order to obtain approval from your country to adopt from Cambodia).

How Is a Child Assigned?

A child is assigned to a family who is government-approved or close to approval. Usually by the time you have your approval from your government, your dossier should be complete. If you are hoping to adopt a boy, the assignment of a child should happen almost immediately. There can be a several-month wait for the assignment of a girl, especially a very young girl.

Only children under eight years old are available, as the Cambodian government does not allow children over eight years old to be placed with families.

Why Are Children Available for Adoption?

As in nearly all the countries from which international adoption is permitted, the reason for a child being placed for adoption is extreme poverty. Cambodia is among the fifty poorest countries in the world. However, the children are well cared for and well fed in the orphanage.

What Are the Children Like in Cambodia?

The children are Asian but appear to have warmer skin tones than those from other countries such as Korea or China.

How Do I Know if the Child Is Healthy?

Your child will receive a physical exam and have serological diagnostics (blood work) completed at a clinic that has a good reputation. Because not all clinics in Cambodia have serological testing that is accurate for HIV, the children are taken to a Western clinic in Phnom Penh.

What Are the Orphanages Like in Cambodia?

Nightlight Christian Adoptions works with one orphanage that we also support with donations. Overall, the children receive good care and plenty of food. The children do not appear to suffer from malnutrition unless they have been recently relinquished by a family member who was not

feeding the children enough food. Some children placed for adoption are not from the orphanage Nightlight typically works with, but are identified at other orphanages.

What Are the Requirements for Adoptive Families?

Sometimes the requirements are flexible, but in general, these are the requirements for adopting in Cambodia:

Both you and your spouse have to be between 25 and 55 years old. (At this time it is not possible for singles to adopt from Cambodia)

You should have no more than two children currently living in your home.

What Are the Dossier Requirements?

Once you apply with Nightlight, you will receive an outline of the dossier, instructions and a check-off list. Also, there are a few forms that need to be customized for you. We can e-mail these forms as an attachment to you. Although the dossier is relatively simple to assemble and forms will be provided, you will have to sign, and have notarized, all the originals. After you sign and have your documents notarized, you then need to make three (3) copies of each document for Cambodia. Also two (2) additional copies should be made: one for you and one for Nightlight's files.

If you need to order any vital records, including your birth certificates, marriage license, or divorce decrees, we suggest ordering at least three to five originals so that you will have them for your home study and in the case of lost documents.

It is preferred that all documents are signed in **blue ink**.

Once the originals are copied, the notary public's stamp/seal needs to be affixed/embossed to each of the copies. *You are not required to sign each photocopy and have it notarized. However, the photocopy must carry an original stamp or seal from the notary.* This can mean that the notary public's stamp is placed on about 140 documents. If for example your police report is notarized at the police station, take the original and state on the document, "This is a true and accurate document." Then sign your name to it and then have a notary public affirm your signature. Once the notary public has signed the document and placed her stamp and commission expiration date on the document, make 3 more copies and have her affix her stamp/seal to the copies.

If notary public service is very expensive, please talk to Nightlight about possible alternatives that could save you money.

When your dossier is completed, please send it to Nightlight, and we will then send it to Cambodia for you. *If you have any problems as you get documents notarized, please contact us for help.*

The required dossier documents are as follows:

1. *Promise Letters/Petition to Adopt* (three forms): In this letter you promise to respect the rights of the adopted child and to provide education and the rights to obtain an inheritance as your own child. Essentially this letter should state that you are willing to provide a good education to your child and that your adopted child will have the same rights as a biological child, including the same inheritance. You will also want to include a statement that you will provide a positive exposure to the child's Cambodian culture. Nightlight will provide this customized letter for you.
2. *Approvals from your country*
3. *Home study*: It should be about five pages long. Attach the social worker's license and the agency's license. Be sure that the social worker includes a special section in the home study that addresses your mental/emotional health. The social worker may say, "Mr. Smith is free of any mental illnesses and is emotionally and psychologically capable of rearing a child."
4. *Birth Certificate*: Attach a signed and notarized affidavit to the birth certificate stating: "This is a true and accurate document, which has not been altered in any way."
5. *Marriage Certificate*: Use an affidavit as done with the birth certificate.
6. *Medical Certificate*: Be sure that your physician includes that you are in good physical and **mental** health.
7. *Psychological Report*: (Please have your home study provider or your doctor write a separate report.) A sample form will be provided.
8. *Police Report*: This report can be from the local, provincial, or national authorities.
9. *Employment Letter*: This should be on your employer's letterhead and should state what is your position is, how much you make, and how long you have been employed. If you are self-employed your accountant will need to write this up on his/her stationery.
10. *Financial Report*: A form will be provided.
11. *Bank Letter*: This letter from your bank confirms that you have an account and states the amount you have in the bank. Because so many people have most of their money in investments, it is not expected that you have much money in the bank.

12. *Passports*: Have a colored photocopy or printout of the data page of your passport. Before you make a copy, be sure that you have signed your passport. Once copied onto paper, write on the paper, "This is a true and accurate copy, which has not been altered in any way." Then sign your name to the statement and have your signature notarized. Each spouse must obtain a passport, even if one spouse does not plan to travel. All copies must be in color.
13. *Agreement with Cambodian Government to provide post-placement updates* (three forms): In this promise letter you state that you will send pictures and an updated report about your child to the Cambodian authorities once a year until the child is 18 years old. Nightlight will provide this customized form for you. (Nightlight will assist you with post-placement reports as long as you are required to send them in.)
14. *Agency Post-Placement Promise Letter*: Sample form provided
15. *Letters of Reference*: Two letters of reference will be required.
16. *Photo page*: Place multiple pictures on one or two pages; include pictures of the inside and outside of the home. Do not have children or pets in the pictures; just have pictures of, you, the adoptive parents.
17. *Power of Attorney* (for facilitator): Form provided.
18. *Power of Attorney* (for orphanage): Form provided.
19. *Power of Attorney* (for non-traveling spouse): Form provided.
20. *Visa pictures*: 6 sets (can be copies from pictures you are taking to Cambodia)

How Does the Adoption Take Place?

Our facilitator in Cambodia will take all of your dossier documents to the appropriate government authorities for processing (this usually takes about 1 to 2 months). Once everything is approved, you have received and accepted your referral, and the Ministry of Social Welfare has approved you to travel, you will travel to complete the final steps. You will not need to be in Cambodia more than about 7 days. A birth certificate and passport will be issued for your child, but these will have your child's old name, not the new family name.

**CAMBODIA ADOPTION
SCHEDULE OF FEES AND EXPENSES**

Fees	
Application	\$500
<i>Due when you select Cambodia with Nightlight:</i>	
Initial Agency Fee.....	\$2,500
<i>Due when your dossier is submitted to Cambodia:</i>	
Final Agency Fee	\$3,500
1 st Facilitator Fee & Expenses (held in trust by NCA)	\$3,040
<i>Due upon assignment of child:</i>	
2 nd Facilitator Fee and Expenses (held in trust by NCA).....	\$3,540
<i>Due upon issuance of adoption decree:</i>	
3 rd Facilitator Fee and Expenses (can be paid in Cambodia)	\$2,040
Total	\$15,120

Estimated Expenses (<i>Many expenses are approximate, and all are subject to change.</i>)	
Vital Records, Verifications, and Authentication.....	\$800 (<i>quite variable</i>)
Home Study Report (varies by country and agency).....	\$1,000 – 4,000
Passport Application Fees for 2 Adults (varies by country).....	\$150
Medical exam and blood test for child	\$300
Car and driver (estimated at 10 days, \$35/day).....	\$350
Airline tickets (estimated for one trip by one person plus child)	\$1,500
Hotel in Cambodia (estimated at 20 days, \$75/day).....	\$1,500
Total	\$5,600 – 8,600 (<i>approximate</i>)

Estimated total Fees: **\$15,120**

Estimated total including Expenses:..... **\$20,720 – 23,720** (*approximate*)

Nightlight tries to estimate expenses that are quite variable from country to country, and even from family to family. It is possible that some expenses will arise for you that Nightlight did not anticipate.

If a child is placed from an orphanage other than the one that Nightlight generally works with (for example, in the case that no children matching your criteria are available from the orphanage we work with), there may be an additional orphanage donation on top of the fees listed in this schedule. This orphanage donation can be an additional \$1000 or \$2000.

If for whatever reason you choose not to accept a referral, you will still be obligated to pay for the medical tests and blood work, not to exceed \$300 per referral.

Please review these figures and then sign and return a copy of this fee schedule to Nightlight. Please note that because of factors beyond Nightlight's control, prices (both fees and expenses) are subject to change.

I/we have read and do agree to these terms.

Signed:

Adoptive Father

Adoptive Mother