

Nightlight[®] Christian Adoptions
International Adoption Program Description
KAZAKHSTAN



GENERAL INFORMATION

Kazakhstan was part of the former Soviet Union. It is located south of Russia and is now an independent republic. The capital city is Astana. If you are considering adopting from Kazakhstan please read the following information as required by the Hague Convention on International Adoptions.

The following websites are a useful place to start for reading more about Kazakhstan adoption and the country:

- <http://adoption.state.gov/country/kazakhstan.html>: Information on international adoptions from Kazakhstan at the U.S. Department of State web site
- <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5487.htm>: Information on the country of Kazakhstan on the U.S. Department of State web site

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

There is a large orphanage system established throughout the country of Kazakhstan. Despite the lack of funds given by the government, Kazakhstan has a reputation of providing orphans with excellent mental and physical care. Since it used to be a part of the Soviet Union, the orphanages in Kazakhstan are very similar to the orphanages in Russia. They are called Detsky Doms, which means “Baby Houses” or “Children’s Homes.” Babies up to ages 3-4 stay in the Baby Houses, while older children stay in Children’s Homes. Children’s Homes may also be divided between pre-school orphanages (ages 4-7) and school age orphanages (ages 7-16). In addition, some orphanages specialize in children with special needs, including learning disabilities, vision impairments, orthopedic problems, etc.

CHILDREN AVAILABLE

Children may be of Kazakh (descendants of Turkic, Mongol and Indo-Iranian tribes), Russian or mixed ethnic background. Children are sometimes available under 1 year of age.

Many times children who have not been put in school by their parents will be assigned to orphanages where they will receive more remedial assistance, even though their intellectual capabilities may be good. Not all children in orphanages are available for adoption. Children become available if their parents have relinquished them for adoption, are deceased or have had the court terminate their parental rights. The reasons for terminating parental rights are varied, but generally include neglect. If a child is available for adoption, they must be put on a local registry of adoptable children (3 months), and the Federal Data Bank of adoptable children (3 months) to give Kazakhstani families an opportunity to adopt the child. Only children that have been on both registries (for a total of 6 months) are available for international adoption. A child may be adopted by a Kazakhstani family or taken into foster care at any time prior to international adoption. Babies are at least 6 months of age before they are eligible for international adoption. When a child has siblings, particularly when they are in the same orphanage or have a close relationship, they must be adopted together. There tend to be more families waiting to adopt girls than boys.

We will provide you with as much information as we are able to obtain on a child, however, there will never be as much information on a child’s background as we would like. The most valuable information will be obtained when the family travels to Kazakhstan. The medical information is more critical for evaluating a baby for adoption since this is essentially all of the information that is available. As a child gets older, their character, personality, temperament and intelligence

become more important. No advance information on children available can be provided by persons other than Kazakhstan adoption officials. Providing videos and medical information on children is specifically not allowed.

ELIGIBILITY TO ADOPT

Married couples and singles may apply to adopt from Kazakhstan. We require that the adopting parents be no more than 45 years older than the child, although this requirement may be relaxed somewhat in the case of older children. The parents must be in good health. Questions as to the number of other children in the family and other considerations are evaluated on a case by case basis depending on the characteristics of the child that is sought for adoption. The orphanage director, the adoption officials or the court may impose other restrictions as they consider necessary or advisable. Kazakhstan will not approve any families for adoption if either parent has anything on their FBI record, even if charges were dismissed.

PROCESS

It generally takes approximately 9-12 months to complete the adoption process. First, you will need to complete your homestudy, get CIS (formerly INS) approval and prepare your dossier for Kazakhstan (about 3-5 months). Then, we will have your dossier translated and sent to the Embassy of Kazakhstan in Washington DC (4-6 weeks). After we receive your registered dossier from the Embassy, it will be sent to our representative in Kazakhstan and processed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education (1-2 months). Once we get a Letter of Invitation for you from the Ministry of Education, you can apply for your visas and travel to Kazakhstan.

TRAVEL

Kazakhstan is a 3 trip process. On trip 1 during the first 15 days, both parents are required to meet regularly with their child to verify that they are bonding and that the child meets their criteria. Your documents are then submitted to the court and a hearing is scheduled for about 4 weeks later. At this time you may return home. Trip 2 (court trip) is about 5-7 days long. Our in-country representative will prepare you for the court proceedings. You will be able to go back home right after your court hearing. The judge's decision becomes official after 15 days and the staff then works on getting the child's new birth certificate, passport and exit documents. The child is typically ready to be brought home about 30 days after the court. It is possible for only one parent to return to Kazakhstan when the child is ready to travel or arrange for an escort to bring adopted child to the United States.

POST ADOPTION

Once you return home, you will need to immediately register your child's passport with the Kazakhstan Embassy (we will provide you with instructions). At this time, Kazakhstan requires post adoption visits with your social worker every year until your child(ren) is 18 years old. Along with several pictures, these reports will be sent to the orphanage staff and officials for receipt in Kazakhstan and allows them to see your child's adjustment into your family and life in the United States.

COSTS

The program fee for Kazakhstan is \$20,000. Your additional Estimated Client Coordinated Expenses of \$18,090 will include airfare, hotel and meals, etc. Gifts and other in-country expenses are comparable to Kyrgyzstan. We make every effort to give you a realistic budget to avoid surprises. However, variations may result from differences in homestudy costs, travel and actual length of stay in Kazakhstan.

Please call or e-mail Kate Zyubenko, Kate@Nightlight.org with any questions.

