



Travelling with children

Travel.gc.ca



Whether you and your children plan to travel or live abroad together or your child will be travelling alone, prepare well in advance to ensure a safe and happy trip.

Travel documents

Check the entry and exit requirements of each country you plan to visit in our [Travel Advice and Advisories](#). Do you need visas? Do your passports have to be valid for a certain period of time after your return date to Canada? Do you need to carry return air tickets? Contact the [embassy or consulate](#) of each country you plan to visit to check its entry requirements.

All children should carry a valid Canadian passport when they are travelling or living abroad. Children under the age of 16 can sign their own passports. If they do not, leave the signature block on page 3 blank. If you sign it on behalf of the child, the passport will be invalid.

If you or your children are dual or multiple citizens, always travel with your Canadian passport so you can access Canadian consular services while you are abroad and re-enter Canada. Always present yourself as Canadian to foreign authorities, especially when entering and leaving the country of your other nationality, unless you must use that country's passport to do so.

Carry supporting identification for each child, such as a photocopy of their birth or citizenship certificate; divorce papers; consent letter for children travelling abroad; all documents referring to the custody of, mobility of, or access to the child; or a death certificate, if one or both parents are deceased. This will help prove the child's citizenship, residency and your custodial and decision-making rights when you return to Canada.

Make sure you have a [consent letter for children travelling abroad](#) or a [court order](#), if required, if a child is travelling abroad alone, without all parents or legal guardians, or with friends, relatives or a group. A consent letter demonstrates that the child has permission to travel abroad, away from parent(s) or legal guardian(s) who are not accompanying them. It may be requested by authorities when a child enters or leaves a foreign country or by Canadian officials when the child re-enters Canada.

The consent letter should be signed by all persons or organizations who are not travelling with the child and who have the legal right to make major decisions for the child, including anyone with access, custody rights or guardianship rights or parental authority.

Make sure the letter includes the date on which the child is to return home. It may also help to have the letter witnessed by a notary public so that border officials will be less likely to question it.

Speak with a lawyer if you are involved in a custody dispute or if a dispute might develop while the child is abroad. If you already have a custody order or agreement, make sure that it permits the child to travel outside Canada. Travelling abroad with the child without the legal right to do so may result in legal or criminal consequences. Canadian custody orders are not automatically recognized or enforceable in other countries without going to court. Check with your destination country's embassy or consulate if you have any questions.

If your child has been abducted or retained without authority abroad, contact the local police and the nearest Canadian embassy or consulate abroad. For more information, visit [Child abduction and custody issues](#).

QUICK TIPS!

Keep a business card or a piece of paper with emergency phone numbers in your child's pocket in case you become separated. If the child has a cellphone, activate the GPS tracking system to make it easier to locate them.

Carry recent photographs of your child in case of emergency. If your child goes missing, take a screen shot of the map location where you last saw them.

Stay healthy

Visit your health care professional preferably six weeks before leaving Canada to learn how to protect your child's health while you are in areas where there are infectious diseases that are not common here. You may need to arrange an alternative or accelerated childhood immunization schedule for your child. Research the medical facilities available in your destination country. For more information on health risks at your destination, see our [Travel Advice and Advisories](#).

Children flying alone

Some airlines will provide services for an unaccompanied child for a fee. If your child will be travelling alone, make sure you

- confirm with the airline whether its staff will escort and supervise your child from check-in through arrival
- find out if there are age limits or flight restrictions for unaccompanied children
- ensure that your child carries their passport on them and pack other identification in their luggage
- ensure that a parent or legal guardian stays at the airport until the flight has departed, even if it is delayed
- ensure that the person meeting the child has appropriate identification and authorization

Important: Global Affairs Canada does not escort or supervise unaccompanied children travelling to or from Canada.

QUICK TIPS!

Contact your airline, bus, train or other transport company to check its policies for child travellers, particularly when children are travelling on their own.

Make sure you read about [Taking small children through security screening](#).

If you are flying with a child under the age of two, you can carry baby food, milk, formula, water, juice and gel packs in small containers in your carry-on bag. You must declare these items when you go through security screening.

Pregnant travellers

If you are pregnant or expect to give birth in a foreign country, be sure to consult your health-care professional preferably six weeks before you travel. Ask them about diseases that may have negative effects on your pregnancy. Make sure you find a local hospital or birthing facility that meets your standards in advance. For more information on health risks at your destination, see our [Travel Advice and Advisories](#).

Make sure your travel health insurance covers pregnancy-related conditions, pre-term and full-term birth and neonatal care. Ask your airline about its policy on flying while pregnant before you book your flight.

If your baby is born abroad, contact the nearest Canadian embassy or consulate to find out how to apply for the child's Certificate of Canadian Citizenship and passport.

For more information, visit [Children and travel](#), or contact us by telephone at 613-944-6788 (TTY 613-944-1310) or email at travel@international.gc.ca.