



Considering Adoption



What is Adoption?

- Children need a caring and stable home. They need parents to provide them with a loving and nurturing environment. The aim of adoption service is to find permanent and suitable homes for children whose parents are unable or unwilling to take care of them.
- Adoption is a life-long commitment for every adopter. The best interests of the children is our paramount consideration.

Who are the children eligible for adoption?

- A child who can be adopted under an adoption order under the Adoption Ordinance* is a child under the age of 18 years and has not been married.
- In practice, children who may require adoption are those who cannot remain in their birth families under different circumstances such as being abandoned or whose parents have relinquished the parental rights over them. These children may have complicated family background. They have the same need for enjoying family life and growing up in a loving and stable environment.
- For information on children available for adoption, please visit the website of the Social Welfare Department at www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_family/sub_listofserv/id_adoptionse/

What to consider before applying for adoption?

Adoption is a life-long commitment that gives adoptive parents the joy to grow their families and to raise children in need of a caring home. Here are some points to consider before moving on to adoption:

- Have you attained the age of 25 years and, if you are married; has your spouse attained the age of 21 years as required by the Adoption Ordinance? Do you have stable relationship with your spouse (at least married for three years)?
- Are you ready to make a life-long commitment to adopt and raise a child?
- Are you in good physical and mental health to take care of a child till the child is independent?
- Are you reasonably educated, preferably having completed secondary education, to provide guidance and support to a child through different developmental milestones?
- Are you in stable employment with financial sufficiency and able to provide stable accommodation for a child?
- Have you resided in Hong Kong for 12 months or above so as to get familiar with the social environment and community resources, and can you stay for a continual period of 12 months or more to complete the adoption process?

Who can arrange adoption and place a child for adoption?

- According to the Adoption Ordinance, only (a) the Director of Social Welfare; (b) an accredited body duly acting under and in accordance with its accreditation; or (c) a person acting in pursuance of an order of the Court, may deal with applications for unrelated adoption and arrange adoption for a child.
- No person other than those stated above shall make arrangement for the adoption of a child or place a child for adoption by unrelated person(s). A person who contravenes the relevant provisions shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable to a fine and to imprisonment.

What are the procedures for making adoption application?

1. Applicants have to contact the Adoption Unit of the Social Welfare Department for registration to attend an adoption briefing session.
2. Applicants have to undergo a thorough home study in assessing their suitability to become adoptive parents. The assessment covers a wide spectrum of areas including but not limited to the applicants' personality, interests, early life experience, coping abilities, marital stability, parenting attitudes and capacities, motivation to adopt, abilities in meeting the developmental needs of the children to be adopted, etc.
3. Applicants have to attend two adoption training workshops and undergo medical examination and a mandatory criminal record check before the completion of home study.
4. Applicants may need to wait patiently for a proposed matching.
5. Applicants have to go through the legal proceedings in accordance with the Adoption Ordinance. The Court will examine each application to ensure that the adoption is in the best interests of the child before an Adoption Order is granted.

Fee Charging

- The home study conducted by the Adoption Unit of the Social Welfare Department is free of charge.
- For cases appointing the Director of Social Welfare as the guardian ad litem of the to-be-adopted child in the adoption application, a payment of HK\$4,210** will be charged for each child.

Exit of Service

Applicants will exit the adoption service when they:

- have completed all the necessary adoption procedures including the granting of an adoption order and require no other service from the Adoption Unit, or
- decide to terminate the adoption proceedings, or
- are found not eligible for adoption.

Adoption Unit/Social Welfare Department

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* An adoption in the HKSAR must be effected in accordance with the Adoption Ordinance, Cap 290.

** The payment will be subject to regular revision