



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](https://travel.gc.ca/advice) (travel.gc.ca/advice). Do you need visas? Do your passports have to be valid for a certain period of time after you leave your destination country? Do you need to carry return air tickets? Contact the [embassy or consulate](https://travel.gc.ca/embassy-or-consulate) (international.gc.ca/protocol-protocole/rep.aspx?lang=eng) of each country you plan to visit to check their 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, but 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 enter and exit the country using that country's passport.

Carry supporting identification for each child, such as a birth certificate, citizenship certificate, divorce papers, consent letters, custody court orders or a death certificate, if one or both parents are deceased. This will help prove your citizenship, residency and custodial rights when you return to Canada.

Make sure you have a consent letter (travel.gc.ca/letter) or a court order if a child is travelling abroad alone, with only one parent or guardian, or with friends, relatives or a group. A consent letter proves that the child has permission to travel abroad from parents or guardians who are not accompanying him or her. 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 any person or organization who is not travelling with the child and who has the legal right to make major decisions for the child, including anyone with access rights, custody rights, guardianship rights or, in Quebec only, 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 certified by a commissioner of oaths, notary public or lawyer 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. If you travel abroad with the child without the legal right to do so, you could be accused of parental child abduction. 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 or the nearest [Canadian embassy or consulate](https://travel.gc.ca/embassies) (travel.gc.ca/embassies) abroad. For more information, visit our [Child abduction and custody issues](https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info/child-abduction-welfare) page (travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info/child-abduction-welfare).

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.

Carry recent photographs of your child in case of emergency.

Stay healthy

Visit your health care provider 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, visit our [Diseases](https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/diseases) page (travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/diseases).

If your child will be attending daycare or school abroad, contact the country's educational authorities for information about the school system. Bring copies of your child's school and immunization records in case you need them.

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;
- pack a photocopy of the child's passport and other identification in his or her luggage;
- ensure that a parent or guardian stays at the airport until the flight has departed, even if it is delayed; and
- ensure that the person meeting the child has appropriate identification and authorization.

Please note that 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 the travel.gc.ca page on [Taking small children through security screening](https://travel.gc.ca/air/children-security-screening) (travel.gc.ca/air/children-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.

If you are pregnant or thinking of becoming pregnant

If you are pregnant or expect to give birth in a foreign country, be sure to see your doctor before leaving Canada. Make sure your travel health insurance covers pregnancy-related conditions, pre-term and full-term birth and neonatal care. Ask your airline about its policies for transporting pregnant women before you book your flight. Try to avoid travelling to areas where malaria, the Zika virus or other dangerous viruses are common, as these mosquito-borne viruses can be harmful to the fetus. If you plan to give birth outside Canada, make sure you find a local hospital or birthing facility that meets your standards in advance.

If you are thinking of undergoing fertility treatments in the future, consult a fertility clinic before you travel. Visiting or travelling to regions affected by the Zika virus may restrict or delay your treatment.

Did you know...?

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

For further information about children and travel, visit [Children and travel](https://travel.gc.ca/child) (travel.gc.ca/child). Or contact us by telephone (1-800-267-6788 or 613-944-6788), TTY (1-800-394-3472 or 613-944-1310) or email (travel@international.gc.ca).