

## Russian Adoption

Children in Russia for adoption range in age from six months to six years and up. Almost all the children in Russia up for adoption are behind in growth and development due to being institutionalized. Once these children are in a family environment they bounce back. There are a variety of ethnicities such as Asian, Gypsy, Mediterranean, and Caucasian. Children of both sexes are available, but there are more boys than girls. Russian children will remain on the adoption list for six months before being considered for international adoption. This way they have a chance to be adopted by a Russian family. Many of the children in Russian orphanages come from teenage pregnancies, although a few are truly orphans. A handful of them are there because the families couldn't afford to care for them.

The Russian adoption program has remained stable, and is second to the top country that Americans choose to adopt from. Americans adopted around 4,639 Russian children in 2005. The Russian Government began a review in 2005 of international adoption procedures, and changes are expected. Fees range from agency to agency but are usually somewhere around \$19,900 to \$25,500. This does not include travel, immigration filing, visa, document preparation or collection.

In order to start a Russian adoption you should choose an agency that deals with Russian adoptions or international adoptions. You should research the different agencies and request information packets from the ones that you might be interested in. In Russia only married couples or single women can adopt. They believe the woman to be the main caregiver. Once you have chosen an agency, you can begin your journey for a Russian adoption. The entire Russian adopting process usually takes about nine months. You start by doing a home study. The home study is basically a report on what the social worker has found out about the adoptive parents. Once you have finished the home study you will have to complete the Dossier. This is paper work that the Russian Government requires.

Before having your paper work for your dossier notarized, ask when the notary's commission expires. Most countries require that the notary's commission be valid for at least a year past the date they witness a signature. When the paper work has been gathered and notarized, your agency will send it to Russia to be translated and notarized, and then they will give the paper work to the Russian authorities.

When a child is ready for adoption your agency will give you notice that there is a referral waiting for you. They used to just send you a picture and travel information, but in April of 2000, Russia changed the regulations to include

that the adopting parents must receive their referrals personally, before the Russian Ministry on Education. When you receive your referral it should include a video tape of the child and any medical information on the child. If for some reason you are not happy with the referral, then your agency should work with you until you are happy. Once you are satisfied with your referral your agency will contact the Russian authorities to prepare the documents for the child being adopted. When the paper work is finished your agency should then contact you and let you know of your departure date and any travel information that you may need to know. Once you agree to a referral, families will take two trips to Russia. Most adoptive children are ready within six months of finding a family. Trip one is usually five to seven days. Usually one month after agreeing to the referral.

Families generally wait two to four months between the first and second trip. The second trip is usually about ten days. The adopted child will be able to go home ten days after the court hearing. In Russia if you get along well with your facilitator it will make it easier in the long run if you ever decide to adopt from Russia again.