

Introduction

Child abductions are difficult and complex when they occur within Canada. When they involve other countries, they are even more so. Provincial and federal governments cooperate closely in assisting affected parents with such abductions. These cases involve Canadian children who have been illegally removed from Canada, or who have been prevented from returning home by one of their parents. There are hundreds of active cases.

Each international child abduction is unique. It is important, therefore, that you, the affected parent, work closely with officials to improve the chances that you can be reunited with your child. You must be directly involved in the search and the anticipated return. This is a bewildering and often prolonged experience. The objective of this manual, therefore, is to help you understand the process and to direct you to the appropriate sources of help.

The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction – known as the *Hague Convention* – is the main international treaty that can assist parents whose children have been abducted to another country. To date, 43 countries have adopted the Convention, including Canada. It offers considerable assistance for children abducted to signatory countries, and over 300 Canadian children have been returned under its arrangements. Canadian cases involving countries that are parties to the Hague Convention are managed through special offices in each of the provincial and territorial attorneys-general or justice departments. These offices are called “central authorities.” Details on the use of the Convention, as well as the list of participating countries, are contained in Section III. Addresses of the Canadian central authorities are given in Section VI.

If you have any questions, please call 1-800-267-6788 or (613) 996-8885. The facsimile number is (613) 995-9221 and the postal address is Consular Operations and Emergency Services Division (JPO), Bureau of Consular Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2. This booklet as well as other information is found on the departmental home page of the World Wide Web. The address is <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca>

Every effort has been made to provide you with accurate and current information in this manual. However, the manual should only be used as a general guide. Individuals facing a potential or actual abduction situation should seek advice and guidance from the appropriate authorities. Nothing in this manual should be construed as legal advice, nor is it intended to replace the advice of your lawyer or other authorities.

