

Preparing Your Family for the Move

Researching the country's customs, culture and history before you leave Canada will make your overseas experience more meaningful and will enable you to better prepare yourself and your family for different living conditions abroad. In addition to using library and Internet resources, contact the National Film Board to borrow videos that you and your family can watch together. Also, use the informal network of friends, co-workers and other people who can offer specific advice about living overseas and adjusting to life in a new country.

Moving Overseas with Children

Immigration authorities in most countries, including Canada, are vigilant about documentation for children crossing international borders. Unless a child has a valid Canadian passport, or is accompanied by both natural parents, he/she needs special documentation in addition to proof of citizenship.

If only one parent is escorting the child, notarized consent from the other parent must be presented, in addition to a copy of any

separation or divorce decree. This consent is required even if the separation or divorce documents award custody of the child to the accompanying parent.

If you have school-age children, education is probably the most significant issue you will need to consider when moving abroad. It is important that you secure appropriate schooling for your children before leaving Canada. You can make your children's adjustment to a new culture easier by getting them actively involved in extra-curricular activities or sports, where they can make friends and feel more a part of their new surroundings.

Keep in mind that working abroad can put an added strain on family relationships. If you are moving to another country with your child and there is a possibility of a custody dispute developing while you are there, you should talk to a lawyer before you leave. A special publication, *International Child Abductions: A Manual for Parents*, is available from DFAIT. See page 25 for details on how to order this publication.