

Information on the Welfare of Your Child

If your child has been found and it is not possible for you to establish direct communication, Canadian consular officials in the country concerned can try on your behalf to make arrangements to visit the child. If they succeed in seeing your child, they will provide you with reports on his or her health, living conditions, schooling and other information. Sometimes, consular officials are also able to deliver letters and photographs to your child and send you the same in return. If the abducting parent will not permit such a visit, the Canadian government office abroad can request the assistance of the local authorities, either to arrange such a visit or to have a local social worker involved.

If information on possible abuse or neglect of your child becomes available to consular officials, the matter will be discussed, with your permission, with local child welfare and law enforcement officers. The nearest Canadian government office abroad can ask local authorities to become involved and ensure that the child is protected.

Re-abductions

The trauma and difficulties associated with international child abductions have led many parents to consider self-help measures, such as the re-abduction of the child. Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada strongly advises against such desperate and often illegal measures. Such action could further endanger your child and others, prejudice any future legal efforts and result in your arrest and imprisonment in another country. If you are tried and convicted in that country, the foreign court will not necessarily give any weight to your custody rights in Canada when imposing its sentence.

Canadian officials, whether in Ottawa or in other countries, cannot take possession of a child abducted by a parent or assist others in acting in violation of the laws of a foreign country. Officials must act in accordance with the laws of the country concerned.

If you were to succeed in having your child returned to Canada in such circumstances, there would be no guarantee that you would not be subject to further attempts by the other parent to re-abduct your child. It is also possible that Canadian courts might recognize the rights of the other parent and order the child returned to the foreign country.