



# ADOPTION EDUCATION, LLC

## SPECIAL REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

### KAZAKHSTAN

1. Introduction
2. History of International Adoption
3. Logistics
4. General Health Issues of the Population
5. Special Considerations for Children Adopted from Kazakhstan

### TO ACCESS THE QUIZ:

After reading this course, please sign back on to [www.adopteducation.com](http://www.adopteducation.com). Go to the table of contents and click on the last section - **Special Considerations for Children from Kazakhstan**. Click the NEXT arrow at the bottom of the page to until you reach question 1 of the quiz.

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## **KAZAKHSTAN**

### **INTRODUCTION <sup>1</sup>**

Kazakhstan is officially known as the Republic of Kazakhstan. It is a country located in Eurasia and is ranked as the ninth largest country in the world. It is also the world's largest landlocked country. It is equivalent to the size of Western Europe. It is neighbored clockwise from the north by Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and also borders on a significant part of the Caspian Sea. While located primarily in Asia, a small portion of Kazakhstan is also located west of the Urals in Eastern Europe. The capital moved in 1997 to Astana from Almaty, Kazakhstan's largest city.

Vast in size, the terrain of Kazakhstan ranges from flatlands, steppes, taigas, rock-canyons, hills, deltas, and snow-capped mountains to deserts. With 16.4 million people (2009 census), Kazakhstan has the 62nd largest population in the world, though its population density is less than 15 people per square mile.

Kazakhstan declared itself an independent country on December 16, 1991, the last Soviet republic to do so. The years following independence have been marked by significant reforms to the Soviet-style economy and political monopoly on power. The country has enjoyed significant economic growth since 2000, partly due to its large oil, gas, and mineral reserves. Other major exports of Kazakhstan include wheat, textiles, and livestock. Kazakhstan is the seventh-largest producer of wheat in the world. However, despite the strength of Kazakhstan's economy for most of the first decade of the 21st century, the global financial crisis of 2008-2009 has exposed some central weaknesses in the country's economy.

Kazakhstan is a constitutional republic with a strong presidency. The president is the head of state. The president also is the commander in chief of the armed forces and may veto legislation that has been passed by the Parliament. President Nursultan Nazarbayev has been in office since Kazakhstan became independent.

The United States was the first country to recognize Kazakhstan, on December 25, 1991, and opened its Embassy in Almaty in January 1992; the Embassy moved to Astana in 2006. In the years since Kazakhstan's independence, the two countries have developed a wide-ranging bilateral relationship.

According to the last 10-year census, held February 28 - March 6, 2009, a total of 16,402,861 people registered in Kazakhstan. Of this population, 52.8 % lived in urban areas. The ethnic Kazakhs represent 67% of the population and ethnic Russians represent 21%. Other groups represented include: Tatars, Ukrainians, Uzbeks, Belarusians, Uyghurs, Azerbaijanis, Poles, and Lithuanians. There is also a small but active Jewish community. Before 1991 there were one million Germans in Kazakhstan; most of them emigrated to Germany following the breakup of the Soviet Union. Most members of the smaller Pontian Greek minority have emigrated to Greece. In the late 1930s thousands of Koreans in the Soviet Union were deported to Central Asia. These people are now known as Koryo-saram.

Kazakhstan is a bilingual country. The Kazakh language, spoken by 64.4% of the population, has the status of the "state" language. Russian, which is spoken by almost all Kazakhstanis, is declared the "official" language, and is used routinely in business. English gained its popularity among the youth since the collapse of USSR and 30% of megapolis dwellers, especially younger generations are fluent in English. Another spoken foreign language which is more or less popular among Kazakhstanis is Turkish due to its proximity to the Kazakh language.

In the early twenty-first century, Kazakhstan has become one of the leading nations in international adoptions. This has recently sparked some criticism in the Parliament of Kazakhstan, due to the concerns about safety and treatment of the children abroad and the questions regarding the low level of population in Kazakhstan.

After decades of religious suppression by the Soviet Union, the coming of independence witnessed a surge in expression of ethnic identity, partly through religion. The free practice of religious beliefs and the establishment

of full freedom of religion led to an increase of religious activity. Hundreds of mosques, churches, synagogues, and other religious structures were built in the span of a few years, with the number of religious associations rising from 670 in 1990 to 4,170 today. Islam is the major and largest religion in Kazakhstan. Approximately 65% of the population are Muslim, mainly followed by the ethnic Kazakhs, who constitute just over half of the population. One third of the population is Russian Orthodox by tradition, including ethnic Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians. Other Christian groups include Roman Catholics and Protestants.

Education is universal and mandatory through to the secondary level. The adult literacy rate is 99.5%. The Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan runs a highly successful *Bolashak* scholarship, which is annually awarded to approximately three thousand applicants. The scholarship funds their education in institutions abroad. The terms of the program include mandatory return to Kazakhstan for at least five years of employment.

Kazakhstanis consistently perform well in Olympic competitions, especially in boxing. Kazakh boxers are generally well known in the world. Football is the most popular sport in Kazakhstan. The Medeo speed-skating rink near Almaty is one of the foremost in the world, and has seen many world records in all speed skating distances.

Today's Kazakhstan is a modern culture. The traditional Kazak lifestyle has blended with influences from Western societies as well as those from Kazakhstan's Russian and Chinese neighbors. Traditional Kazak belief held that separate spirits inhabited and animated the earth, sky, water, and fire, as well as domestic animals. To this day, particularly honored guests in rural settings are treated to a feast of freshly killed lamb. Such guests are sometimes asked to bless the lamb and to ask its spirit for permission to partake of its flesh. Besides lamb, many other traditional foods retain symbolic value in Kazak culture. Kazakh culture is largely influenced by a Turkic nomadic lifestyle and Islam.

In terms of business customs, it is customary to shake hands and call people by their first names at business meetings, as well as at informal get-togethers. However, men generally do not shake women's hands in company. Small gifts--pens, company logo pins, memo, and books--are frequently given at the end of an initial meeting as a token of appreciation. Business cards are the norm, often in both Russian and English. Kazakhstani business people are generally less direct than American business people, and what can be accomplished in a few meetings in the United States might take more in Kazakhstan, requiring patience and discipline on the part of the U.S. business people.

It is common in Kazakhstan to have dinner with business contacts, but usually only after establishing business contacts in a more formal setting. Business attire is worn. Usually diners share a bottle of vodka or cognac and offer toasts, stating their desire for a fruitful business relationship and warm personal relations between partners. After-hours informal meetings, dinners and toasts, as well as weekend hunting and barbecues can be very important to forge business relations.

## **HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION <sup>2</sup>**

Following the breakup of the former Soviet Union, the Independent Republic of Kazakhstan was founded in 1991. The sharp decline in the Kazakh economy contributed to a large number of children being abandoned and living in orphanages. Although the economy has made a come back in recent years, due to economic reform and foreign investment, the number of children living in institutions has grown. Kazakhstan adoption statistics start in 1998. For prior years, they are lumped into "Soviet Union".

Currently the adoption legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan is based on the Constitution of Kazakhstan, Convention on Children's Rights (Kazakhstan joined this convention in 1994), the Marriage and Family Law of Kazakhstan as well as other laws and regulations. According to the current laws of Kazakhstan, Kazakh children are available for adoption by foreigners if the citizens of Kazakhstan, who permanently reside in Kazakhstan, do not take care of them, if relatives of these children do not adopt them, regardless of their citizenship or place of living. In order to regulate the process of international adoption and according to the article 209 of the Marriage and Family Law of Kazakhstan, remedial legislation made by the Government of Kazakhstan on the 12th of November 2002 #1197, the Rules of adoption of children - citizens of Kazakhstan - by foreigners were approved. The children can be adopted by citizens of Kazakhstan who do not reside on the territory of Kazakhstan, by foreigners, who are not relatives of the children, in 3 months after putting the children on the centralized registry at the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan.

According to the Law of Kazakhstan on changes and additions to the Law of Kazakhstan on Kazakh citizenship of May 17, 2002 #322-11, the child who is a citizen of Kazakhstan and is adopted by foreigners maintains his/her citizenship until the age of consent. The child can become the citizen of another country only after coming of age and according to his/her free will. This requirement was introduced to protect the rights of adopted children.

In 2006, interest in domestic adoption began to increase among citizens in Kazakhstan, and in 2007, the number of domestic adoptions there had grown quickly. National pride and the natural desire to have a family are high motivators.

Almaty City had been closed for over a year due to the Department of Education reevaluation of the adoption process and their enhanced rules regarding post adoption reports. It was reopened May 2007.

In March 2008, The Kazakhstan Embassy and Consulates announced an immediate suspension of adoption dossier processing while the government of Kazakhstan completed a review of adoption cases.

### **ADOPTIONS FROM KAZAKHSTAN TO THE UNITED STATES**

<b>FY 2009</b>	295
<b>FY 2008</b>	380
<b>FY 2007</b>	547
<b>FY 2006</b>	588
<b>FY 2005</b>	755
<b>FY 2004</b>	835
<b>FY 2003</b>	828
<b>FY 2002</b>	482
<b>FY 2001</b>	658
<b>FY 2000</b>	382
<b>FY 1999</b>	77
<b>FY 1998</b>	54

**NOTE:** All statistics given correspond with the U.S. Government fiscal year, which begins on October 1 and ends on September 30.

**SOURCE:** US Department of State, Intercountry Adoption, [http://adoption.state.gov/news/total\\_chart.html](http://adoption.state.gov/news/total_chart.html)

## LOGISTICS<sup>3</sup>

Kazakhstan is not a party to the *Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption* (the Convention). Adoption agencies are not recognized in Kazakhstan. Current Kazakhstani law does not recognize any intermediaries that would represent the parents and act between prospective adoptive parents and children. However, foreign prospective adoptive parents can have assistants, such as interpreters or lawyers, who help them through the adoption process.

In March 2008, the Department of State was informed that the Embassy of Kazakhstan is conducting a review of intercountry adoption procedures. Until completed, this review affects the processing of new adoption dossiers. Although initial indications were that no new cases would be processed during the review, some new cases may have been accepted. It is not known at this time how long this review will require.

To bring an adopted child to the United States from Kazakhstan, you must be found eligible to adopt by the U.S. Government. The U.S. Government agency responsible for making this determination is the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). In addition to these U.S. requirements for adoptive parents, Kazakhstan also has the following requirements for adoptive parents:

- **Residency Requirements:** The prospective adoptive parents must reside with the child at the child's habitual residence for a minimum of 14 days prior to the adoption. This pre-adoption bonding period cannot be waived.
- **Age Requirements:** There are no age requirements other than an unmarried prospective adoptive parent must be at least 16 years older than the child. Prospective adoptive parents over 60 years of age have found it difficult to adopt.
- **Marriage Requirements:** Prospective adoptive parents can be single or married, however, some unmarried prospective parents have found it difficult to adopt.
- **Income Requirements:** While there are no official income requirements, the prospective adoptive parents are required to show proof of their ability to support the adopted child.

Kazakhstan has specific requirements that a child must meet in order to be eligible for adoption. You cannot adopt a child in Kazakhstan unless he or she meets the requirements outlined below. In addition to requirements set by Kazakhstan, a child must meet the definition of an orphan under U.S. law for you to bring him or her home back to the United States.

### Eligibility Requirements:

- **Relinquishment Requirements:** Kazakhstani law requires that orphans be registered with the Ministry of Education Committee of Guardianship and Care for at least six months before they are eligible for adoption.
- **Sibling Requirements:** It is difficult for foreigners to adopt two or more biologically unrelated children at the same time. Prospective adoptive parents wishing to adopt two or more non-siblings on the same trip are urged to question their adoption agencies carefully prior to visiting the children to ascertain whether this is possible in the city where they plan to adopt.

Kazakhstan's Adoption Authority is the Ministry of Education.

The first step in adopting a child from Kazakhstan is usually to select a licensed agency in the United States that can help with your adoption. Adoption service providers must be licensed by the U.S. state in which they operate.

Once the prospective adoptive parents have been cleared for adoption from their home state and have completed the initial processing requirements of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, they must register with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to indicate their intention to adopt a Kazakhstani orphan. The Kazakhstani Embassy or Consulate transfers the dossier to the MFA in Astana for processing. The MFA forwards it to the Ministry of Education for review.

The dossier is forwarded to the Guardianship Body in the town where the prospective adoptive parents wish to adopt. **Note:** *The length of time for dossier processing is unpredictable.*

After the dossier has been processed, the Guardianship Body issues a letter inviting the parents to travel to Kazakhstan to apply for adoption. **Note:** *This letter is necessary for the parents to obtain a Kazakhstani visa.* Also, some cities, such as Almaty and Pavlodar delay issuance of invitation letters for indefinite periods.

After obtaining a visa, the prospective adoptive parents are free to travel to Kazakhstan to select their child and proceed with their petition for adoption. **Note:** *Make sure you are registered as a foreigner to Kazakhstan either by the Embassy of Kazakhstan or by a passport control officer upon entry to the country. If not registered, you need to get registered with a local Migration Police office within five calendar days starting from the date of entry.*

There is no such thing as a “referral” or “pre-identification” in Kazakhstan. Even though the prospective adoptive parents may wish to adopt a particular child, the Government of Kazakhstan does not match a child to the parents or in any way “assign” them a child until they arrive in Kazakhstan, select a child in person, and apply to the court to adopt the child. Information about medical histories of the child and other pertinent information will be made available only at the orphanage during selection of the child. Prospective adoptive parents have a minimum of 14 days of personal contact with the orphan before formally submitting an adoption application. This means that prospective adoptive parents must stay in the town where the orphan is living and visit the orphan on a regular basis during this two-week period. Nearly all Kazakhstani jurisdictions require that in the case of married petitioners, **BOTH parents be present for the entire 14-day bonding period.**

Once all legal requirements are fulfilled, prospective adoptive parents may submit their adoption application to the civil court that will decide whether to grant the adoption.

The process for finalizing the adoption (or gaining legal custody) in Kazakhstan generally includes the following:

- **Role of The Adoption Authority:** Adoption agents are encouraged to contact the Ministry of Education to notify the Ministry of their intention to provide adoption services.
- **Role of Adoption Agencies:** Under Kazakhstani law, prospective adoptive parents may work with any agency or individuals they choose. Please note that adoption agencies are not recognized in Kazakhstan. The current Kazakhstani law does not assume any intermediaries that would be represent the parents and act between prospective adoptive parents and children eligible for adoption. However the regulation admits that adoptive parents as foreigners can have assistants, such as interpreters or lawyers, who would help them to go through the process of adoption.
- **Time Frame:** The prospective adoptive parents can expect to stay in Kazakhstan for a minimum of 60 days to complete the adoption procedures. This period includes the residency requirements listed in the WHO section, as well as the time to complete all post-adoption and U.S. immigration paperwork.

## GENERAL HEALTH OF THE POPULATION

### Population <sup>4</sup>

Like many countries, Kazakhstan is experiencing a decrease in population. The annual population growth rate from 1970-1990 was 1.2% but this decreased to -0.4% from 1990-2007. Life expectancy on the other hand has risen, from 62 in 1970 to 67 in 2007. Kazakhstan also has one of the world's largest gender gaps in life expectancy. In 2006, according to official statistics, males could expect to live for 59 years, while female life expectancy was 70 years.

In recent years, fueled by oil and gas exports, Kazakhstan's economy grew at a rapid clip, causing poverty rates to fall and enabling substantially increased spending on social programs. However, due to the global economic crisis, most of the country's development goals are far from being achieved. Many of the gains that have been made are now in jeopardy, exacerbating the vulnerability of women and children.

Issues facing children in Kazakhstan:

- HIV/AIDS is spreading at an alarming rate, driven in part by intravenous drug use. Even as the public becomes more informed about the virus, many high-risk groups and young people continue to engage in dangerous behaviors. More babies are being born to HIV-infected mothers, and rates of mother-to-child transmission are increasing.
- Along with infant deaths, maternal mortality remains a serious public health problem. The growing incidence of gynecological diseases, infertility and miscarriages is also attributed to the low use of contraceptives and the practice of induced abortion as a means of family planning.
- Every year, thousands of children - including orphans and children with disabilities - are institutionalized.
- Only 11 per cent of rural children have access to pre-school.
- Only one third of Kazakhstan's 153,000 children with disabilities have access to special education programs.

The infant mortality rate is defined as the probability of dying between birth and exactly one year of age expressed per 1,000 live births. This rate decreased from 51 in 1990 to 28 in 2007. The under 5 mortality rate is defined as the probability of dying between birth and exactly five years of age expressed per 1,000 live births. This rate also decreased from 60 to 32 during the same time period. Six percent of infants were born with low birthweight (less than 2,500 grams) from 2000-2007.

### HIV/AIDS <sup>5</sup>

By the end of 2006, Kazakhstan had reported a cumulative total of 7402 HIV cases. Kazakhstan had also reported that 464 of these individuals had developed AIDS, including 358 who had died. Among the cumulative HIV cases for which the mode of transmission was known (92%), about 80% have been infected through injecting drug use. In 2006, the Kazakh authorities reported 1745 new HIV cases, almost twice as many as reported in 2005 (964). Additionally, 132 new AIDS cases and 85 deaths among AIDS cases were reported.

The most affected age group is over 25 years old (77%), the great majority are male (74%). Mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) account for less than 1% of the reported HIV infections. A steep increase in HIV-positive children (under 15 years) from 2005 (10) to 2006 (93) was reported. This can partly be explained by 15 new HIV cases in the year 2006 confirmed to be due to MTCT, and partly by an HIV nosocomial outbreak among children in southern Kazakhstan in 2006. By the end of 2006, the cumulative number of mother-to-child HIV transmission was 37.

Karaganda and Pavlodar (northern cities close to the Russian border) are the two most affected regions and account for about 70% of the reported cases. In addition, Almaty, and the trading city Shymkent have high rates of infection.

The most vulnerable groups in Kazakhstan are intravenous drug users (IDUs), sex workers and prisoners. The country is located on a main drug-trafficking route that facilitates drug use. Despite the seemingly large number of 45,000 officially registered IDUs, a study conducted in 1998-2002 indicates that the actual number may exceed 250,000. According to national estimates, 3% of the population injects drugs, which would increase the number of IDUs to 450,000. The involvement of women and children in drug use and trafficking is likely to increase HIV prevalence in these groups. The estimated number of female sex workers is 20,000-50,000, of whom 8-30% are IDUs.

### **Mortality**<sup>6,7</sup>

One should keep in mind that the mortality crisis peaked around 1994 or 1995 (in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union) and, therefore, the trends of the period 1995 – 2003 are generally more favorable than those for the period 1990–2003.

In 2003, noncommunicable diseases accounted for about 85% of all deaths in Kazakhstan, external causes for about 11% and communicable diseases for about 2%. Cardiovascular diseases were the main group of causes of death in Kazakhstan in 2003, responsible for 57% of overall mortality. Half of all CVD mortality is due to ischemic heart disease, and a little more than one third is attributed to cerebrovascular diseases. Since 1990 the rates have increased by about 45% and continue rising. Alcohol consumption, smoking, diets high in fats and low in antioxidants, and poor detection and treatment of hypertension are major contributing factors to the increase in cardiovascular mortality.

In 2003, the proportion of cancer deaths comprised about 12% of total mortality in Kazakhstan, while respiratory diseases accounted for about 6.4% of total mortality. Deaths from tuberculosis increased from 1990 and began to decrease again from 1997.

External causes of injury and poisoning include unintentional injuries (transport injury, poisoning, injury due to falls, fires and drowning and other) as well as intentional injuries (self-inflicted injuries, injuries due to violence and war and other). Overall external causes were responsible for 161 deaths per 100,000 population in 2005. A significant proportion of external cause mortality were due to suicide, in particular among males (49 per 100 000 male population in 2005). Car accidents were another important cause of external cause mortality and the use of seat belts, although mandatory, is not strictly enforced.

### **Morbidity, health and social problems from alcohol use**<sup>8</sup>

The number of juvenile alcoholics in Kazakhstan is rapidly increasing despite the state's efforts to curb the nation's alcohol drinking habit. A national center designed to introduce a healthier lifestyle to Kazakhstan reports that in 2004, 610 children in the country were diagnosed as alcoholics. In 1999, only 29 such cases were recorded. Juvenile alcoholism is growing at a much higher rate compared to alcoholism among adults, especially in the southern and northern regions of the country. If adult alcoholism has quintupled in 10 years (from 46 to 258 alcoholics per 100 000), among children under 14 years of age, it has grown tenfold. Among those aged 14 to 18 years old, more than 400 per 100 000 are believed to be alcoholics. The rate of alcoholic psychosis incidence per 100 000 population was 257.36 in 2001 and 349.11 in 2002. According to a nationally representative survey with 2000 respondents conducted in 2001, 55.6% of men in Kazakhstan were heavy vodka drinkers (defined as consuming more than 100 g (*approximately 3.5 oz.*) of vodka per sitting).

### **Tobacco Use**<sup>7</sup>

Central Asia has also become one of the key targets for the international tobacco industry. The Living Conditions, Lifestyles and Health Study of eight countries in the former Soviet Union (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine) found the highest smoking prevalence among males in Kazakhstan, where 65.3% of male and 9.3% of female respondents reported to be currently smoking. However, according to three surveys conducted by the National Centre on Healthy Lifestyles in 1998, 2001 and 2004, the incidence of tobacco smoking among the general population decreased from 28% to 23% and smoking among health professionals decreased from 34% to 26%. Despite health education campaigns in schools, however, the surveys did not find evidence of reduced smoking rates among adolescents, with an incidence of 14% in 13–15 year-olds in 2004.

## **Drug Abuse**<sup>9</sup>

Drug abuse is more widespread and growing faster in Kazakhstan than in any other Central Asian state. The prevalence of registered drug users in 2006 is 355 per 100,000 people, more than 200 percent higher than any other state in the region. In comparison, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that 1.02 percent of the adult population use opiates. The number of newly registered drug users in 2006 was 70 per 100,000 people, an increase of 20 percent. Opium is the principle drug abused in Kazakhstan accounting for 47 percent of all registered drug users and 72 percent of all opiate users.

The profile of the average Kazakh drug abuser is an unemployed, urban dweller. The majority of registered drug abusers were between 18 and 30 years of age (54 percent) with a large secondary portion over 30 years of age (38 percent). The primary drug used is heroin (47 percent) followed by opium (18 percent).

UNODC estimates conducted in 2000 place annual cannabis use prevalence at 4.2 percent of the adult population. In comparison, UNODC estimates in 2006 suggest that 1.02 percent of the adult population use opiates.

Synthetic drug use is not widespread in Central Asia primarily due to economic factors. In general, synthetic drugs are more expensive and are used by the affluent or middle class often linked to raves and night clubs. Kazakhstan does not report synthetic drug use as a category of registered drug users. However, of the 7,857 registered drug users categorized as "other" in 2006, it is likely that some are synthetic drug users. Despite the suspected increase in non-opiate narcotics, heroin, because of significant supply and the addictive nature of the drug, still remains the drug of choice in Kazakhstan.

Results of the 2006 school survey "Lifetime use of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances" suggest that, while drug use is still very limited, Kazakhstan has the highest level of drug use (12.4 percent) and the highest level of synthetic drug use (2 percent) among young people in Central Asia.

## **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILDREN ADOPTED FROM KAZAKHSTAN**

### **Before The Adoption**

International adoption from Kazakhstan is similar to adoption from Russia: the children are either abandoned or removed from their homes and placed in orphanages. Not all children in the orphanages are eligible for adoption because some are placed there temporarily by their parents for a variety of reasons. The size of the orphanages varies and will have anywhere from 50-250 children at a time of different ages. The orphanages are generally good, many with doctors, music programs, and good caregiver ratios. Infants may be adopted as young as six months old.

Children from birth up to 3-4 years old are placed into the Baby Houses regardless of the reason for placement. Once the children are 4 years old, they are moved to a Preschool Orphanage for children age 4-7. The children age 7-16 live in an Orphanage, which is sometimes called a Children's Home.

Kazakhstan has been known for their care of their children and the children's good health. Because the caretaker to child ratio is very small, the children are incredibly well bonded. Attachment and bonding disorders are also less prevalent than in some other Eastern European countries. The dedication of the caregivers shows in the health and development of the children who are adopted.

In general, girls are less likely to be abandoned than boys. Because of culture and tradition, female children are frequently perceived as being easier to raise than boys. Girls often take care of their parents as they get older. Boys are more susceptible to childhood illness. When they are grown, they are at a greater risk to join a gang, or to enter into a life of substance abuse and/or crime. Women, particularly single women, frequently prefer to raise girls.

Children available for adoption include healthy infants, toddlers, and school age children (both girls and boys). The children range in age from 9 months to 15 years old. Special needs children are also available. Children that are considered special needs are: Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, neurological diseases, crossed eyes, lame, interior organs problems, cleft palate. The children in Kazakhstan represent a variety of ethnicities including Asian, Eurasian, and Caucasian.

Some birthparent history may be available, along with some of the child's medical history. The children in Kazakhstan are thought to be a little healthier and less likely to be affected by Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effect due to the Muslim population. All children are screened for Hepatitis B and C and HIV.

### **After the Adoption**<sup>3</sup>

Kazakhstan has a requirement that all adopted children must have a Post Placement Report (PPR) filed for them each year until the adopted child turns 18. This is extremely important, and a failure by adoptive parents to comply with this requirement could have a negative effect on the ability of future families to adopt from Kazakhstan. The PPR should be done in the U.S. state where the child and family reside, preferable by a licensed social worker and include up to 5 photos of the child. The PPR should be translated into Russian or Kazakh and sent to the Department of Education of the city or region from where the child was adopted.

We strongly urge you to comply with the wish of Kazakhstan and complete all post-adoption requirements in a timely manner. Your adoption agency may be able to help you with this process. Your cooperation will contribute to Kazakhstan's history of positive experiences with American parents.

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