

# becoming a parent



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## CIVIL STATUS and the birth of a child



### Registering your child: your responsibility as parents!

All parents must declare the birth of their child to the Registrar of Civil Status. This is done by completing the Declaration of Birth form available in hospitals.

#### **Deadline**

This declaration must be sent within 30 days of the child's birth for prompt entry in the register of civil status of Québec.

**You could take advantage of your hospital stay to do it!**

**For more details, do not hesitate to contact us.**

**In Québec City**

Telephone: (418) 643-3900

**In Montréal**

Telephone: (514) 864-3900

**Other regions of Québec**

Telephone: 1 800 567-3900 (toll free)

[www.etatcivil.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.etatcivil.gouv.qc.ca)

*Relations  
avec les citoyens  
et Immigration*

**Québec** 

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Emploi,  
Solidarité sociale  
et Famille

Québec 

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This document and its French version *Devenir parent* can be downloaded (in the PDF format) on Québec's national portal [www.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.gouv.qc.ca) and on the website of the Régie des rentes du Québec [www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca)

#### Notes :

Certain programs may change during the year.  
The information contained in this guide was  
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sous le titre Devenir parent. Vous pouvez obtenir  
un exemplaire gratuitement en téléphonant à  
Communication-Québec au 1 800 363-1363.*

# Foreword

The arrival of a child is an exceptional event for the whole family. For parents, it is a wonderful adventure, but it involves a raft of administrative procedures.

To help them sort it all out, this guide discusses the main services, leave, benefits and assistance to which new parents are entitled before and after the arrival of their child. Communication-Québec has also added a new section for the 2004 edition of this guide, in order to answer the questions of a growing number of future parents about the main steps in adopting a child.

If, after reading the guide, you would like more information on the programs and services offered by the departments and organizations of the Québec government, you can call the Communication-Québec office in your area. Note that certain programs may change during the year. When in doubt, feel free to call Communication-Québec at 1 800 363-1363.

If, after reading the guide, you require additional information about Government of Canada programs, call 1 800 622-6232.

Lastly, we would like to thank all the departments and organizations that assisted in the updating of this publication.

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# During Pregnancy

## Prenatal Meetings

All CLSCs offer perinatal services; pregnant mothers can contact their CLSC to find out about them.

### Prenatal Courses

Prenatal courses are a part of perinatal services. Their objective is to help parents enjoy the pregnancy period more fully, and to prepare for delivery and the child's arrival. The courses are given throughout Québec.

To find out where to register, contact the CLSC in your locality.

### Nutrition

Sound nutrition during pregnancy is vital to the health of the unborn child. CLSCs offer information as well as literature on this topic. There are also assistance programs that deal specifically with the nutrition of pregnant women, the most popular being the OLO program, which stands for the French "œuf, lait, orange", which is part of integrated perinatal program. This program lends assistance to needy pregnant women by supplying them with an egg, a litre of milk and orange juice every day during their pregnancy so that their babies are born healthy and with the proper birth weight. The women are also provided with regular check-ups and an array of services for mothers-to-be.

For more information on this program or any other nutritional assistance program, contact the CLSC in your area.

The address is listed in the white pages of the telephone book, under "CLSC".

## For a Safe Maternity Program

A worker who is pregnant or breastfeeding enjoys special protection under the *Act respecting occupational health and safety*. If her working conditions are dangerous to her health or to her unborn child or the child she is nursing, she is entitled to be reassigned to other duties that are not dangerous and that she is able to perform.

If her workstation cannot be modified or if no other assignment is possible, she may temporarily stop working and receive compensation from the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST). This is not maternity leave, but rather a preventive-type program whose main objective is to allow the worker to stay at work in a safe environment.

The measures that employers have at their disposal to meet this objective are the following:

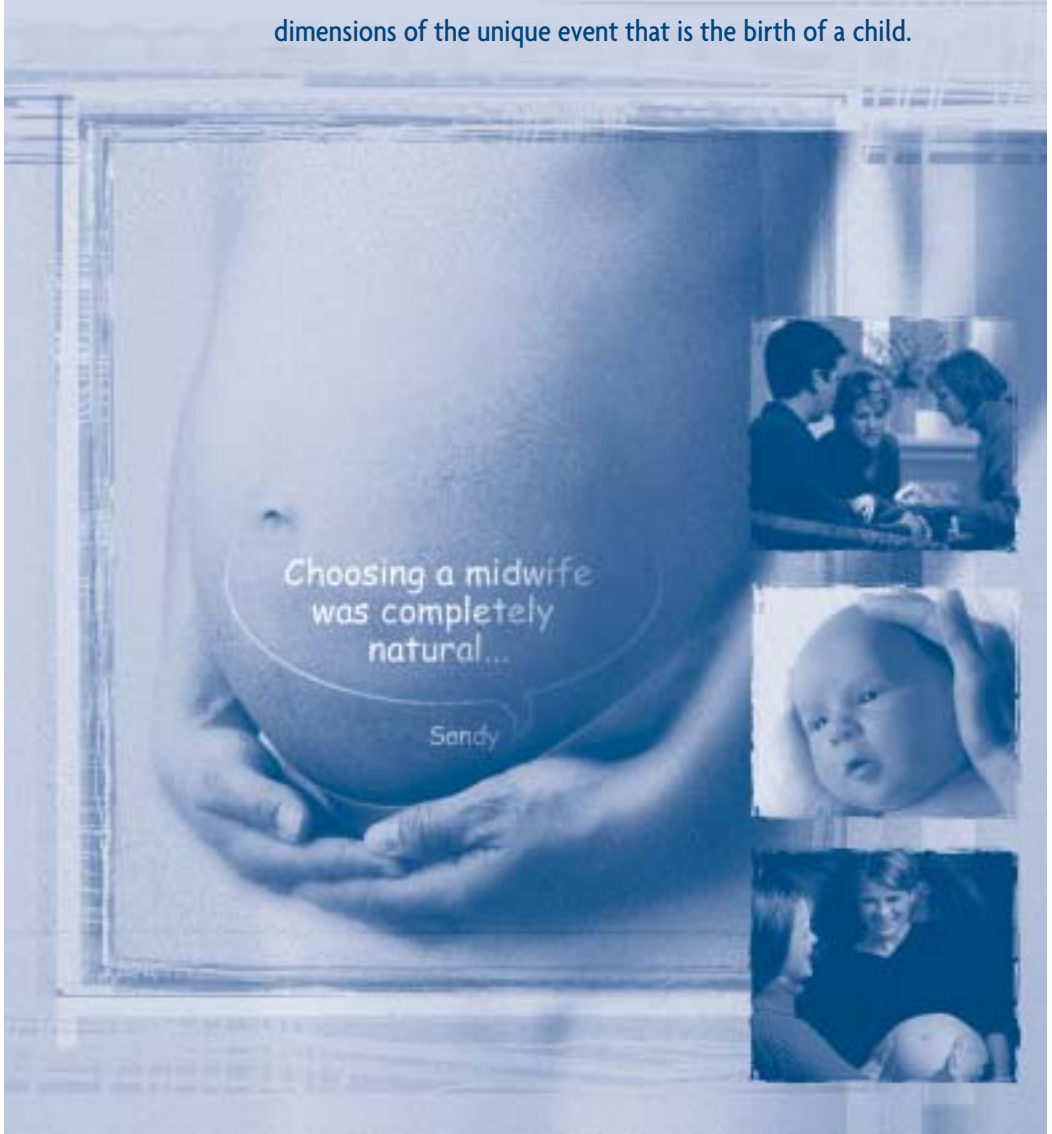
- Elimination of danger at source
- Change in the worker's duties
- Workstation modification
- Reassignment to another duty or job

To avail herself of the For a Safe Maternity Program, the worker must ask a physician to fill out the form entitled *Preventive Withdrawal and Reassignment Certificate for a Pregnant or Breastfeeding Worker*. That physician must consult the physician in charge of health services at the establishment where the worker is employed. If there is no physician at the establishment, the physician designated by the head of the public health department in the area where the establishment is located must be consulted. The certificate is valid only if such a consultation is carried out. There is no charge to the worker for the certificate.

# A midwife

is a healthcare professional  
who will meet your needs.

She will follow you throughout the prenatal, perinatal  
and postnatal periods. She also offers global care, taking  
into consideration the physical, psychological and social  
dimensions of the unique event that is the birth of a child.



**Do you want the services of a midwife?**

For help finding one, contact Info-Santé CLSC.

[www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/infosanteclsc](http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/infosanteclsc)

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Québec



A worker must proceed in the same way if she wishes to avail herself of the program in regard to breastfeeding. Even if she obtained a reassignment or preventive withdrawal because of pregnancy, she must get a new certificate for breastfeeding. In such cases, however, only conditions that put the breastfed child's health at risk can be taken into consideration.

For more information, contact one of the regional divisions of the CSST. The address is listed in the blue pages of the telephone book in the Gouvernement du Québec section under "Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail", or under the "Keyword Heading" in the new blue pages.

## Leave granted under the *Act respecting labour standards*

### Maternity Leave

Generally speaking, Québec employees are entitled to the maternity leave provided for under the *Act respecting labour standards*.

Leave period:

- Maternity leave may last no more than 18 consecutive weeks without pay.
- If the employee requests it, the employer can grant longer maternity leave.
- Maternity leave may start only at the beginning of the 16th week before the anticipated date of delivery.

Provisions also stipulate that the employee may be absent in certain cases, for example:

- When there is a danger of interruption of the pregnancy or a danger to the health of the mother or the unborn child because of the pregnancy
- When the pregnancy is interrupted before the start of the 20th week preceding the anticipated date of delivery
- When the pregnancy is interrupted as of the 20th week
- When the mother's or the child's state of health requires it.

Three weeks before her departure, or less if her state of health forces her to leave sooner, the worker must provide her employer with a written notice indicating the date on which her maternity leave will begin and the anticipated date of her return to work.

The notice must be accompanied by a medical certificate attesting to the pregnancy and the anticipated date of delivery. A written report signed by a midwife may be substituted for the medical certificate.

At the end of the maternity leave, the employer must reinstate the employee in her usual position and give her the salary and benefits to which she would have been entitled had she remained at work.

### Leave for Medical Examinations Related to Pregnancy

An employee may be absent from work, without pay, for medical examinations related to her pregnancy. She must, however, notify her employer as soon as possible of the time she will be away.

### Spousal Leave upon the Birth or the Adoption of a Child

An employee may be absent from work for five days upon the birth or adoption of a child, or when the pregnancy is interrupted as of the 20th week. The first two days of absence are paid if the employee has accumulated at least 60 days of service.

This leave may be taken one day at a time if the employee so requests, but it may be taken no later than 15 days after the child's arrival at the residence of the father or mother, or the interruption of the pregnancy.

### Parental Leave

The mother and father of a newborn child and a person who adopts a child who is not yet of school age are entitled to parental leave without pay for no more than 52 consecutive weeks. This is in addition to maternity leave, which lasts a maximum of 18 weeks. An employee who adopts his or her spouse's child is not entitled to parental leave.

# Soon-to-be parents?

The Act respecting Labour Standards contains numerous provisions concerning absences for events related to pregnancy. It also provides for a maternity leave lasting a maximum of 18 uninterrupted weeks, a leave that the employee can take as she sees fit before or after the anticipated date of delivery.

The Act respecting Labour Standards also provides for a leave for an adoption and a parental leave without pay of 52 uninterrupted weeks, of which the father and the mother of a newborn and the person who adopts a child may benefit.

Other provisions of the Act govern an employee's return to work after a maternity leave or a parental leave. Provisions also allow the father to be absent from work at the time of the birth or the adoption of a child, or parents to be absent from work to meet obligations related to the care, health or education of their minor child in the event of unforeseeable circumstances or circumstances beyond their control. Under certain conditions, the father and the mother may also refuse to work overtime in order to fulfill such obligations.

Finally, the Act provides, under certain conditions, for a leave of not more than 12 weeks during a 12-month period when the presence of a parent is required with his child due to a serious illness or a serious accident. This absence can be extended up to 104 weeks when it is a serious and potentially mortal illness.



## Have any questions ?

Contact Customer Services at the Commission des normes du travail or consult our Web site. You can also request our free publication Labour Standards in Québec, or download it off the Internet.

**[www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca)**

Montréal Area: (514) 873-7061

Elsewhere in Québec, toll free: 1 800 265-1414

Commission  
des normes  
du travail

Québec 

At the end of parental leave, the employer must allow employees to return to their usual positions at the same salary and with the same benefits to which they would have been entitled had they remained at work. If the position has been eliminated, the employee retains the same rights and privileges as if he or she had not taken leave.

However, these provisions must not give the employee an advantage the employee would not have had if he or she had not taken leave. Furthermore, the employee's participation in group insurance and retirement plans must not be affected by his or her absence, provided he or she regularly makes the contributions required under the plans and the employer pays its share.

Parental leave may not begin prior to the week in which the child is born or the week the child is entrusted to the employee in the case of adoption. It can also begin the week that the employee leaves work in order to travel outside Québec to pick up the child. Parental leave ends no later than 70 weeks after the birth of the child or 70 weeks after the child is entrusted to the employee in the case of adoption.

To take parental leave, employees must give their employer at least three weeks' notice, indicating the date on which the leave will begin and the date on which they will return to work. Notice may be shorter in certain cases.

**Note:** Unionized employees should also check the clauses in their collective agreements dealing with these types of leave.

For more information, call the **Commission des normes du travail (CNT)**:

- Montréal area: (514) 873-7061
- Elsewhere in Québec: 1 800 265-1414
- Teletypewriter: see page 38

## Special Employment Insurance Benefits

There are three types of benefits:

- Maternity benefits
- Parental benefits
- Sickness benefits

Individuals may receive more than one of these benefits, but only for a maximum of 50 weeks during the same benefit period.

For most beneficiaries, the benefit rate is 55% of their average insurable earnings. Beneficiaries who are part of a low-income family (less than \$25 921) and who receive the Canada Child Tax Benefit will receive a supplement based on that benefit. Their benefit rate may be increased up to a maximum of 80% of their average insurable earnings. However, the amount they receive may not exceed the weekly maximum of \$413.

### Maternity Benefits

Maternity benefits are paid only to the natural mother. She may receive these benefits from the eighth week before the anticipated date of delivery and for a maximum of 15 weeks. As a rule, she cannot receive maternity benefits after the 17-week period following the birth of the child or the anticipated date of delivery.

These benefits are granted only under certain conditions, namely:

- The beneficiary must stop working or receiving regular employment insurance benefits because of pregnancy.
- The beneficiary must have accumulated 600 insurable working hours in the year prior to filing her application.

## Parental Benefits

In addition to maternity benefits, parental benefits may be paid for a maximum of 35 weeks. They may be paid to either the mother or the father, or shared by them, for the period of their choice during the first year after the birth of the child or the arrival of the child at home in the case of an adoption.

Parental benefits are available during the year following the arrival of the child at home, and the periods do not need to be consecutive. Adoptive parents may also be entitled to 35 weeks of parental benefits. However, they are not entitled to maternity benefits.

In order to receive the maximum of 35 weeks of parental benefits, the beneficiary should be sure not to wait more than 15 weeks after the birth of the child or the time the child arrives in the beneficiary's home (for adoptive parents) before filing an application.

These benefits are granted only under certain conditions, namely:

- The beneficiary must stop working or receiving regular employment insurance benefits in order to take care of the newborn or adopted child.
- The beneficiary must have accumulated 600 insurable working hours in the year prior to filing an application.
- The beneficiary must submit an adoption certificate or proof of the birth of the child.

## Sickness Benefits

To receive sickness benefits, the applicant must submit medical proof. Sickness benefits may be paid for a maximum of 15 weeks at any time during the benefit period. However, the beneficiary may not receive special benefits—including maternity benefits, parental benefits and sickness benefits—for more than 50 weeks. To receive sickness benefits, as well as maternity or parental benefits, the beneficiary must have accumulated 600 insurable working hours in the year prior to filing an application.

In certain cases, the maximum period of combined benefits (sickness, maternity and parental) may total 65 weeks. Note, however, that, to be entitled to that increase in the number of weeks, the person must meet certain conditions:

- Have received no regular benefit
- Have received the three types of benefits (sickness, maternity and parental)
- Have received sickness benefits for at least 15 weeks and parental benefits for at least 35 weeks

For more information about these three types of special employment insurance benefits or for application forms, contact the Human Resource Centre of Canada.

The address is listed in the blue pages of the telephone book in the Government of Canada section under the heading "Human Resources Development Canada, Human Resource Centre of Canada", or under the "Keyword Heading" in the new blue pages. Or for information, call:

- Throughout Québec: 1 800 206-7218

## Québec Maternity Benefit Program

The ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille pays a single benefit of \$360 to supplement the income of a woman who:

- Must be absent from work because of maternity
- Is eligible for employment insurance maternity benefits
- Has resided permanently in Québec for at least 12 months on the date her maternity leave begins
- Has a gross family income of less than \$55 000
- Applies for the benefit no later than one year after the date of her eligibility for employment insurance maternity benefits

The form entitled *Maternity Benefit Application* may be obtained from a Human Resource Centre of Canada or from Communication-Québec.

For more information, contact:

**Service des opérations financières  
Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité  
sociale et de la Famille**

425, rue Saint-Amable, 2<sup>e</sup> étage  
Québec (Québec) G1R 4Z1  
Phone: (418) 646-4099  
or 1 800 463-4022  
Fax: (418) 646-6436

Mailing address:

Case postale 15 900  
Terminus postal  
Québec (Québec) G1K 8A7

## Employment Assistance: A Special Pregnancy Benefit

If an **expectant** mother is a beneficiary of the employment assistance (social aid) program, the ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille may grant her an additional \$55 a month as a special pregnancy benefit, in addition to her monthly benefit.

This assistance, which is paid during each month of pregnancy until delivery, will enable the expectant mother to buy the foods required for a proper diet during this period.

To obtain this benefit, the expectant mother must provide her local employment centre case officer with the following document:

- A certificate signed by a physician or midwife confirming her pregnancy.

For more information, contact your local employment centre.

The address is listed in the blue pages of the telephone book in the Gouvernement du Québec section, under the heading "Aide financière". In certain phone books, it can also be found under "Emploi et Solidarité sociale, Centre local d'emploi".



declared to the Registrar of Civil Status in order to be entered in the Québec register of civil status. People who intend to raise the child together outside of marriage or a civil union must declare their filiation with the child to the Registrar of Civil Status.

## Obligations of Parents

Whether they are married or in a civil union, and whether or not they are living together, parents have the rights and duties inherent in the custody, supervision and upbringing of their child, and they must feed and look after him or her.

## All Children Are Equal

The law makes no distinction based on the type of union of the parents, whether the child is related to his or her parents by blood or by adoption, or whether he or she was conceived naturally or by a medically-assisted reproductive technique. By law, all children are born equal and are the legal heirs of their parents.

## Choosing a Family Name and Given Name

A child's parents may choose for him or her one or more given names, and a single or composite family name consisting of no more than two parts of the parents' family names.

It is recommended that the child have no more than four given names and **that the usual given name (the name to be used regularly) be placed first.**

In the case of a composite given name, the two parts must be joined by a hyphen.

It is very important that the given names attributed when the child is baptized or in any other religious ceremony correspond to those entered in the Québec civil status register, with no changes or additions.

The given name of one of the parents may never be used as the child's family name. It may, however, be one of his or her given names. In addition, the family name of one of the parents that is not used for the child's family name may be used as one of his or her given names.

In regard to the child's family name, the parents can choose from among the following options:

1. If both parents have family names that are not composites, such as Gardiner for one parent and Patton for the other, the child may be given as a family name:

- Gardiner, the first parent's family name
- Patton, the second parent's family name
- Or a composite name made up of the two family names linked by a hyphen, Gardiner-Patton or Patton-Gardiner

2. If both parents have composite family names, such as Talbot-Gardiner for one parent and Smith-Patton for the other, they may, if they wish, give their child a single family name composed of one of the parts of their family names:

- Talbot only
- Gardiner only
- Smith only
- or Patton only.

However, if the parents wish to give their child a composite name, a choice must be made, since the family name of the child cannot have more than two parts:

- Talbot-Gardiner, one parent's family name
- Smith-Patton, the other parent's family name
- Or a name made up of part of one of the parents' family name and part of the other parent's family name. Ten combinations are possible:
  - Talbot-Smith, Talbot-Patton, Gardiner-Smith, Gardiner-Patton, Smith-Talbot, Patton-Talbot, Smith-Gardiner, Patton-Gardiner, Gardiner-Talbot or Patton-Smith

A child whose maternal filiation or paternal filiation alone has been established bears the family name, in whole or in part, of the parent whose filiation with the child has been established in the *Act of Birth*.

## Additional Information

When the family name given to the child is composed of two parts joined by a hyphen, this is the name that will become, along with his or her given name, the child's legal name. It will then have to be used as registered, with no change in the order of the parts. Furthermore, the parents may not use for their child the initial of the family name of one parent along with the family name of the other parent. However, they may include the initial in the child's given names.

Since the baby's name must appear on the *Declaration of Birth*, the parents must make their choice as early as possible.

Since the *Declaration of Birth*, once completed and signed by the parents, is an official document, no correction may be made to the basic information appearing on it **after 30 days following the date of birth of the child**. If, after this deadline, the parents want to add one or more given names or change the family name or the given names entered on the declaration, they will have to go through the name change procedure, circumstances permitting, and pay the related costs.

The full name of our child will be:

Family name:

Given names: \_\_\_\_\_

usual (name regularly used)

second

third

fourth

## Registration

All parents must declare the birth of their child to the Registrar of Civil Status, whether or not the birth is followed by baptism or any other religious ceremony. To this end, they must fill out the document entitled *Declaration of Birth*, and this form and the *Attestation of Birth* **must be sent to the Registrar of Civil Status in the 30 days following the birth**.

## Attestation of Birth

The birth attendant (physician, nurse, midwife or any other person who assists the mother during delivery) fills out and signs the *Attestation of Birth*. The attestation indicates the date, time and place of birth, the sex of the child, and the name and address of the mother. The hospital staff gives the parents a copy of the *Attestation of Birth* as well as the *Declaration of Birth*, which is to be filled out.

## Declaration of Birth: The Child's Act of Birth

The parents must copy the information from the *Attestation of Birth* onto the *Declaration of Birth* and indicate the child's given and family names, the type of union of the parents and the parents' address. After receipt and registration by the Registrar of Civil Status, this document becomes the child's *Act of Birth*, filed in the Québec civil status register. This is why the parents must fill out the *Declaration of Birth* carefully (in block letters), being sure not to cross anything out or make changes that may be confusing. If changes must be made to the declaration, the declarant or declarants should always enter his or her, or their initials beside each correction. **This legal document may not and must not be altered with liquid paper.** The declaration **must be prepared in the desired language (English or French)** since the language of the document determines the language in which the certificate of birth is issued. The declarant or declarants must fill out and sign the *Declaration of Birth* in the presence of a witness, who must also sign the document.

A witness is a person 18 years or older who attests to the signature of the parents on the *Declaration of Birth*. The witness must indicate his or her identity by filling in the appropriate sections (in block letters), and must then sign and date the form.

It is very important that the spelling of the child's family name and given names be correct and that the whole declaration be reread before adding the necessary signatures, in order to ensure that the information is entirely in keeping

with the parents' wishes. An error may not only cause delays in registration, but also lead to serious problems for the child in proving his or her identity throughout his or her life and, in some cases, to costly legal procedures.

## How to Complete the Declaration of Birth

**BOX 1**  
Child's surname (if compound, joined by a hyphen).

**BOX 2**  
Record the usual given name first, followed by the others (max. 4) separated by a comma.

**CASES 5, 6, 7**  
Nom, code et adresse de l'hôpital.

**BOXES 8 TO 14**  
Mother's identity according to her act of birth.

**BOXES 15 TO 21**  
Father's identity.

**BOXES 23 TO 26 AND 32**  
To be completed if the declarant is neither the father nor the mother (adoption, foster care).

**BOX 27**  
To be completed in order to immediately obtain the newborn child's health-insurance card.

**BOXES 34 TO 38**  
The witness (a friend, a nurse or anyone of full age) attests that the declaration was made in his or her presence.

**BOXES 39 TO 42**  
Reserved for the use of the registrar of civil status. Please do not write or attach anything here.

**BOX 3**  
Date and time of birth.

**BOX 4**  
Indicate the sex of the child.

**BOX 22**  
**IMPORTANT**  
Are the parents married to each other?

**BOX 28**  
**IMPORTANT**  
Mother's signature, especially if the couple is not married.

**BOX 30**  
**IMPORTANT**  
Father's signature, especially if the couple is not married.

## When to Declare the Birth

It is recommended that the *Declaration of Birth* be filled out at the hospital and given to the staff, who will see that it is sent, along with a green copy of the *Attestation of Birth* filled out by the birth attendant, to the Registrar of Civil Status. The parents keep only the copy of the *Declaration of Birth*.

If it is impossible to see to these formalities at the hospital, the *Declaration of Birth*, along with the copy of the *Attestation of Birth*, can be sent to the Registrar of Civil Status within 30 days of the birth of the child. Be sure to leave several days for mailing and to send in the documents as soon as possible.

Upon receipt of the documents, the Registrar of Civil Status draws up the *Act of Birth* on the basis of the *Attestation of Birth* and the *Declaration of Birth*, comparing these two documents to be sure of the identity of the newborn child. If either of the documents is incomplete, the information does not match or the documents are illegible, the Registrar of Civil Status must question the declarants or the birth attendant before drawing up the Act.

Once the *Act of Birth* is drawn up, it is entered in the Québec register of civil status under a single registration number. Subsequently, the parents receive a notice confirming the filing of the *Act of Birth* in the register. Concurrently, the Registrar of Civil Status forwards to the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec the information needed for the newborn to be eligible for the health insurance program. This is done confidentially.

### Late Registration or Failure to Register the Child in the Civil Status Register

Delay in registering a birth in the register of civil status or failure to do so may result in problems for the child. The *Act of Birth* establishes the child's identity, sex and filiation, in short, his or her legal existence. Without this Act, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the child to obtain certain documents (health insurance card, social insurance card, passport, etc.) or to prove entitlement to government programs or social benefits.

In addition, the Registrar of Civil Status will conduct an analysis if there is a delay and \$50 must be paid when the birth is declared after the prescribed 30-day deadline. If the birth is declared more than a year later, the fee is \$100.

In certain circumstances, a declaration of filiation may be filed late, particularly in the case of same-sex parents. It is advisable to contact the Registrar of Civil Status for information on the subject.

### Obtaining Proof of Birth

Many organizations ask for proof of birth, i.e. a *Birth Certificate*. You can obtain one by filling in the form entitled *Request for Certificate or Copy of Act*. It is available at Registrar of Civil Status counters in Québec City and Montréal, on the Registrar of Civil Status Website ([www.etatcivil.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.etatcivil.gouv.qc.ca)\*), and at CLSCs, caisses populaires Desjardins and Communication-Québec offices.

\*The form can be filled out on the screen, then printed.

It is essential to apply for a full-sized *Birth Certificate* for a minor child since it shows the names of the parents. The document costs \$15. Note that there is no expiry date for a *Birth Certificate*, but that a more recent document may be required at any time.

You can submit the form by mail, by fax or by taking it to the service counter.

#### IN QUÉBEC CITY

##### Registrar of Civil Status

205, rue Montmagny  
Québec (Québec) G1N 2Z9  
Phone: (418) 643-3900  
or 1 800 567-3900  
(from outside Québec City only)  
Fax: (418) 646-3255  
E-mail: [etatcivil@dec.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:etatcivil@dec.gouv.qc.ca)  
Website: [www.etatcivil.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.etatcivil.gouv.qc.ca)

#### IN MONTRÉAL

##### Registrar of Civil Status

2050, rue De Bleury, 6<sup>e</sup> étage  
Montréal (Québec) H3A 2J5  
(Place-des-Arts Metro station)  
Phone: (514) 864-3900  
or 1 800 567-3900  
(from outside Montréal only)  
Fax: (514) 864-4563  
E-mail: [etatcivil@dec.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:etatcivil@dec.gouv.qc.ca)  
Website: [www.etatcivil.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.etatcivil.gouv.qc.ca)

#### Office hours

Monday to Friday,  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

# Screening for Hereditary Metabolic Diseases

## Your Baby's Urine Is Very Precious

Before a mother leaves the hospital with her baby, a blood sample is taken from the baby's heel in order to carry out screening for genetic diseases. In addition, a kit containing a yellow information form and blotting paper is given to the mother so that she can take a sample of her baby's urine when the child is 21 days old.

It is important to:

- Complete the information form and put it in the return envelope with the blotting paper
- Write the baby's approximate weight and the type of feeding (This information will help in interpreting the results.)
- Collect urine using the absorbent pads in the kit given to the mother. **It is important not to use commercial-type moist baby wipes to wipe the baby's bottom before taking the sample, as they can affect results.** For the same reason, **do not apply cream, oil or powder to the baby's bottom**
- Soak the blotting paper completely with urine. It must be wet on both sides or the analyses cannot be carried out and the sample will have to be taken again
- Carefully follow the instructions for taking the sample

The urine screening program is voluntary. By sending in their baby's urine sample, parents enable their child to be screened early and to be given medical treatment, if necessary, as quickly as possible.

## Which Hereditary Metabolic Diseases Can Be Detected?

The metabolic diseases that can be detected are caused by proteins and their derivatives (amino and organic acids) that are poorly absorbed or improperly used by the body. Metabolic diseases are categorized into two types:

- Those that cause serious clinical problems and require immediate therapeutic intervention
- Those that require follow-up and genetic counseling

## If a Urine Sample Is Not Taken on the 21st Day

As the saying goes "Better late than never!". It is important for the parents to take a urine sample as soon as they realize they have forgotten.

## Who Pays for These Analyses?

The Réseau de médecine génétique du Québec, which is affiliated with the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, pays the costs of these analyses. If you lose the kit or dirty the blotting paper, or if you would like more information, contact the following service:

### Programme provincial de dépistage urinaire Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke

Hôpital Fleurimont  
Local 1403, Département de pédiatrie  
3001, 12<sup>e</sup> Avenue Nord  
Fleurimont (Québec) J1H 5N4  
Phone: (819) 564-5253  
Fax: (819) 564-5217

## Benefit and Allowances

Québec families may be entitled to the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB), the Québec family allowance and the allowance for handicapped children, for their children under 18 years of age.

To receive the benefit and the allowances, both the eligible individual and his or her spouse must file income tax returns every year, even if they have no income to declare. These amounts are not seizable or taxable.

### Canada Child Tax Benefit

The federal government's Canada Child Tax Benefit varies according to family income, the number and age of the children, the family situation and the deduction for daycare expenses.

The benefit is paid every month. It is revised if any change occurs in the family situation, such as the birth or death of a child, a change in beneficiary, a separation or divorce.

Eligibility for this benefit is reviewed every year in July based on the data provided on the income tax return for the previous year.

In addition, low-income families with children are entitled to the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS), which is included in the payment of the Canada Child Tax Benefit. The NCBS is the Canadian government's contribution to the National Child Benefit Program (NCBP), a joint initiative of the federal, provincial and territorial governments.

### Who Receives the Canada Child Tax Benefit?

The benefit is paid to the person who is mainly responsible for the child's care and upbringing, and usually lives with the child. It is normally paid to the mother. If the child lives with the father, the father (or his spouse, if he consents) will be eligible to receive the Canada Child Tax Benefit.

## Procedure

To apply for the Canada Child Tax Benefit and the Québec family allowance, one step is all it takes: Fill out the *Application for Canada Child Tax Benefit form* and send it at your earliest convenience to the address indicated on the envelope. Your Canada Child Tax Benefit may be paid by direct deposit; simply fill out part 3 of the form.

The form is usually included with the information documents given to the mother during her stay in hospital. It can also be obtained from the Canada Revenue Agency at one of the following numbers:

- Canada Child Tax Benefit Information Service: 1 800 387-1193 (toll-free)
- To order forms and publications: 1 800 959-2221
- Teletypewriter: see page 38
- Service for the visually-impaired: 1 800 267-1267

To find out more about the Canada Child Tax Benefit, contact the information service or visit the Website of the Canada Revenue Agency ([www.ccradrc.gc.ca/benefits](http://www.ccradrc.gc.ca/benefits)). The forms and publications of the Agency are available online ([www.ccradrc.gc.ca/forms](http://www.ccradrc.gc.ca/forms)), or you can request that the forms be sent to you by mail ([www.ccradrc.gc.ca/formspubs/request-e.html](http://www.ccradrc.gc.ca/formspubs/request-e.html)).

### Régie des rentes du Québec Family Benefits

The Régie des rentes du Québec administers Québec family benefits. They include the family allowance and the allowance for handicapped children. They are paid to the person who is mainly responsible for the care and upbringing of the child and who lives with him or her. They are paid to the child's mother, as a priority, or to the father's spouse, to the father with the consent of his spouse or to any other person who sees to the child's needs.

## Family Allowance

The purpose of the family allowance is to see to the essential needs of low-income families. Account is taken of the Canada Child Tax Benefit provided by the federal government.

You are entitled to the family allowance if:

- you are responsible for a child under 18 years of age;
- you reside in Québec and you or your spouse is one of the following:
  - a Canadian citizen
  - a permanent resident
  - a temporary resident or a resident holding a temporary permit within the meaning of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, having resided in Canada for at least 18 months (formerly, a “visitor” or “permit holder”)
  - a protected person within the meaning of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (formerly, a “refugee”).

The amount of the allowance varies according to whether the person has a spouse or not, the number of dependent children under 18 years of age and family income. The Régie calculates the amount of the allowance on August 1 of each year according to the previous year’s family income established on the basis of the Québec income tax return.

The allowance may be paid by cheque or by direct deposit. The frequency of payment is determined according to the amount to which you are entitled. To receive the family allowance, you need not submit an application to the Régie des rentes du Québec. Rather, you must submit your application for the Canada Child Tax Benefit to the Government of Canada, which will forward it to the Régie des rentes du Québec.

## Allowance for handicapped children

The allowance for handicapped children is granted to the parents of a child with a impairment or development disorder that significantly limits the child in his or her daily

activities for a period expected to last at least one year. The financial assistance is independent of the family allowance. It is paid until the child reached the age of 18 or until his or her state of health improves and the Régie des rentes du Québec no longer recognizes that the child is handicapped.

The amount of the allowance is \$119.22 a month for everyone, regardless of family income or handicap.

To receive the allowance for handicapped children, fill out the Régie des rentes du Québec’s Application for an allowance for a handicapped child. It is available on the Website of the Régie, from Communication-Québec, the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec, CLSCs and hospital centres specializing in the care of children. The form has two parts. The first must be filled out by the parents and the second, by the health care professional who best knows about the child’s state of health.

Whether you receive the family allowance or the allowance for handicapped children, it is important to notify the Régie and the Canada Revenue Agency (formerly the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency) if changes arise in your conjugal status, responsibility for a child or the child’s placement begins or ends, or in the event of death.

## Death of a child during the month of birth

It is possible to receive the family allowance and, if appropriate, the allowance for handicapped children for the month of death. In that case, an application must be submitted to the Régie des rentes du Québec. The Régie will ask for the certificates of birth and death.

For more information on family benefits:

By the Internet:

[www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca)

By mail:

**Régie des rentes du Québec**

Case postale 7777

Québec (Québec) G1K 7T4

By phone:

Québec City area: (418) 643-3381

Montréal area: (514) 864-3873

Elsewhere in Québec: 1 800 667-9625

Your child could  
be entitled to an

[ allowance for ]  
handicapped children





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## Your child

Does your child have a physical or  
mental handicap that significantly  
restricts everyday activities?

See our Internet site or call  
1 800 667-9625

**WWW**  
[rrq.gouv.qc.ca](http://rrq.gouv.qc.ca)

Régie des rentes   
Québec 

## Assistance Granted to Parents of Triplets or Quadruplets

The Minister of Health and Social Services grants financial assistance to families in which the mother has given birth to triplets or quadruplets. This non-recurrent helps parents cope with the sudden and substantial increase in expenses.

The Minister issues, in the mother's name, a cheque for \$6000 for **live** triplets or \$8000 for **live** quadruplets when the children are discharged from the hospital.

The hospital is in charge of notifying the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and providing all necessary information following the births. The parents have no special steps to take and will receive their financial assistance approximately two months later. In the event of problems, the parents must check with the hospital to find out if their application was duly sent to the department. In all cases, the hospital must forward the application to the following address:

**Direction générale du financement  
et de l'équipement  
Ministère de la Santé  
et des Services sociaux**

1005, chemin Sainte-Foy, 7<sup>e</sup> étage  
Québec (Québec) G1S 4N4  
or fax it to (418) 266-5995

## Breastfeeding Assistance

Women who are beneficiaries of the employment assistance (social aid) program and who give birth to a child may, under certain conditions, receive a special breastfeeding benefit or support for the purchase of formula for their baby.

### Special Breastfeeding Benefit

The ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille provides a special breastfeeding benefit of \$55 a month to mothers who breastfeed their children, until the children reach the age of one. The mother must breastfeed her baby throughout this period.

To be entitled to the benefit, the mother must provide the local employment centre case officer with a signed declaration indicating the anticipated breastfeeding period. A second written declaration will be required once the baby is six months old.

### Support for the Purchase of Infant Formula

A mother who does not breastfeed her baby and who wants to give the baby formula may obtain financial support for the purchase of these preparations.

For the first nine months, the mother may obtain regular, soya-based or lactose-free formula without providing a medical certificate. However, this support can be extended over a period of 12 months if the child has an intolerance to cow's milk or lactose, or has other specific problems and if the preparations are prescribed by a physician.

Note that it is not possible to receive the breastfeeding benefit and support for the purchase of formula at the same time, except during the month when the feeding method changes. The infant formula may be purchased **only** in drugstores.

As soon as the baby is born, the mother must get in touch with her case officer. The baby's *Birth Certificate* must be submitted promptly in order to benefit from this support as soon as possible.

For additional information, contact your local employment centre.

The address is listed in the blue pages of the phone book in the Gouvernement du Québec section under "Aide financière". In certain phone books, it can also be found under "Emploi et Solidarité sociale, Centre local d'emploi".

# Health Insurance and Prescription Drug Insurance

## Health Insurance Card

The child must be registered with the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ). When the birth occurs in Québec, it is sufficient to register the newborn in the register of civil status to initiate the registration process at the RAMQ. Once eligibility has been confirmed, the child will receive his or her first health insurance card. The parents have no other form to complete.

It is the responsibility of one of the parents to fill out, as carefully as possible, and sign the *Declaration of Birth* provided by the hospital where the child is born. The hospital staff will send the duly completed document to the Registrar of Civil Status within 30 days. Subsequently, the Registrar of Civil Status will notify the parents of the registration of their child in the civil status register. The Registrar of Civil Status will send the information to the RAMQ confidentially. After checking the eligibility of the child, the RAMQ will issue the health insurance card. Only one card will be issued for the child.

Until the child is one year old, the parents may, for administrative purposes, use their own health insurance cards while waiting to receive the child's card.

For a birth outside Québec, contact the RAMQ to register the newborn child:

Québec City area: (418) 646-4636  
Montréal area: (514) 864-3411  
Elsewhere in Québec: 1 800 561-9749  
Teletypewriter: see page 38

## Prescription Drug Insurance

Once eligibility for health insurance is confirmed, the parents must ensure their newborn is covered by a prescription drug insurance plan.

Parents registered with a group insurance plan comprising drug coverage must include their newborn in their plan.

However, if the parents are covered by the public prescription drug insurance plan administered by the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec, the newborn will be automatically registered under this plan.

# Child Safety

## Car Seats for Newborn Children

From your child's very first ride in an automobile, it is mandatory that you fasten him or her in an appropriate newborn car seat. This specially designed seat custom fits the child's body and keeps the baby in a semi-reclining position, while supporting the baby's lower back.

It is not always necessary to buy a car seat. A number of CLSCs and community organizations rent them.

Instructions for installation:

- Always install the newborn car seat with the child's back facing traffic. The child must be looking toward the rear of the vehicle, so that the neck and rib cage have a better chance to absorb shocks.
- Place the baby in the newborn car seat, preferably alongside another passenger, at the centre of the back seat. If you are alone with your baby and the vehicle is not airbag-equipped on the passenger side, you may put the newborn in the car seat next to you on the front seat.
- Ensure that the seat has been set properly in a horizontal position, so that the child's back and head are well-supported.
- Using the seatbelt or the universal anchoring device called ISOFIX or Latch, install the car seat on the seat of the vehicle. As of September 2002, all vehicles are fitted with the system, which securely fastens the car seat using a special belt.
- Place the belts over the newborn's shoulders and ensure the buckle is well-fastened.
- Make the belts loose enough so that no more than one finger can be inserted between them and the child's body.
- Push up the fastener connecting the two belts until it is under the child's armpits in order to prevent the child from being ejected from the seat in case of impact.

For more information, contact the **CLSC in your neighbourhood, CAA-Québec or the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec** at one of the following numbers:

- Québec City area: (418) 643-7620
- Montréal area: (514) 873-7620
- Elsewhere in Québec: 1 800 361-7620
- Teletypewriter: see page 38
- Website: [www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca)

### Safe Kids Canada

For information on the prevention of child injuries, call Safe Kids Canada, an organization that promotes the safety of children, at:

- Throughout Québec: 1 888 723-3847

### Product Safety Bureau

The Product Safety Bureau of Health Canada enforces the *Hazardous Products Act* and intervenes in regard to consumer product safety, including the safety of equipment, material and furniture used by and for children. For information and various publications on the safety of cribs, playpens, toys and any other items for children, contact:

#### Product Safety Bureau Health Canada

1001, rue Saint-Laurent Ouest  
Longueuil (Québec) J4K 1C7  
Phone: (450) 646-1353  
or 1 800 561-3350

### Centre anti-poison du Québec

The Centre anti-poison du Québec is a 24-hour emergency telephone service for victims of acute poisoning. In case of poisoning, phone the Centre anti-poison du Québec immediately at 1 800 463-5060.

- The nurse on duty will ask about the condition of the victim and the circumstances of the incident. You will also be asked questions about the substance ingested.

- Depending on the situation, the staff of the Centre anti-poison will suggest a home treatment or will refer you to the nearest hospital.

#### Centre anti-poison du Québec

1050, chemin Sainte-Foy,  
aile L, 1<sup>er</sup> étage  
Québec (Québec) G1S 4L8  
Phone: Emergency: 1 800 463-5060  
Administration: (418) 654-2731

## Educational Services and Daycare Services

### New Provisions of the Family Policy

At the heart of the new family policy are two provisions that have been in effect since 1997, and that are aimed at responding to the new needs of families and helping them reconcile work and family:

- The introduction of child educational services and daycare services
- The improvement of the family allowance for low-income families (see section entitled "Benefit and Allowances")

In addition, on May 25, 2001, the Québec government adopted the *Act respecting parental insurance*. This Act lays out the parameters of a future Québec plan for parental leave. The plan will offer parents two options—a 40-week leave with a 75% income replacement rate or a 50-week leave with 70% for the first 25 weeks and 55% for the remaining weeks. The Québec plan will be available to a broader spectrum of the population, notably to self-employed and part-time workers. Fathers, who are increasingly committing themselves to caring for their children, will also be eligible for paternity leave. The Québec parental insurance plan is dependent upon negotiations with the federal government.

## Child Educational Services and Daycare Services

Educational services and daycare services have been introduced to foster the development of children and provide equal opportunities for every one of them:

- Children under 5 are eligible for educational daycare services at \$7 a day.
- Children under 5 from disadvantaged families have access to free educational daycare services.
- On the Island of Montréal, children from disadvantaged families have access in designated schools to kindergarten, coupled with a daycare service beginning at 4 years of age.
- Starting at age 5, children can now attend kindergarten full time.
- Children in kindergarten and elementary school can attend school daycare for \$5 a day.

## Early Childhood Centres and Other Daycare Services

Since its introduction in September 1997, the network of early childhood centres has continued to develop. These centres offer two services: daycare centres or home daycare services. The services are mainly provided for children from birth until they attend kindergarten. However, a centre may also take in children of kindergarten or elementary school age when they cannot be taken in by a school daycare service.

Early childhood centres offer a standard educational program aimed at the overall development of the child. The same is true of daycare centres with a permit from the ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance. Moreover, the department has introduced a plan for the development of the network of early childhood centres and other daycare services calling for the creation of 200 000 places in daycare centres in Québec by the end of 2005-2006.

## Making an Informed Choice

Before choosing a daycare service, you must identify your needs and those of your child. What are your preferences? Would you rather have a family environment or a group organization? Your educational values will also have an impact on your choice of daycare services. Furthermore, it is important to meet with the staff and to visit the premises.

You should know that people and organizations wishing to offer daycare services to seven children or more in one facility must hold an early childhood centre or daycare centre permit. Similarly, a person who provides daycare services in a private residence for more than six children for remuneration must be recognized by an early childhood centre as being responsible for a home daycare service and must be assisted by another adult.

Hence, in home day care, such a person cannot, if alone, take in more than six children, including his or her own or those who usually live with him or her, if they are aged under 9. Of this number, only two children can be under 18 months. If this person has the assistance of an adult, he or she can take in a maximum of nine children, including his or her own and those of the person assisting, if they are aged under 9. Of this number, a maximum of four children can be under 18 months.

## Reduced-Contribution Daycare Services

Seven-dollar-a-day places are available in early childhood centres for children who are under the age of 5 on September 30. Agreements with certain for-profit daycare centres allow them to offer \$7-a-day places, too. The people in charge of these services can tell you whether they have such an agreement.

For every child who has access to a \$7 place, low-income families eligible for the PWA program (see page 38) can avail themselves of \$5-a-day financial assistance for daycare services.

In addition, a number of spaces are set aside for free educational services 23 1/2 hours a week for children under 5 whose parents are employment assistance (social aid) recipients.

**It's a good idea to check whether the daycare service you select is eligible for the reduced contribution program.**

For more information, contact the **ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille:**

600, rue Fullum  
Montréal (Québec) H2K 4S7  
Phone: (514) 873-2323  
or 1 800 363-0310  
Fax: (514) 873-4250  
E-mail: famille@mfe.gouv.qc.ca

## Passport

### Traveling with a Child

Since December 2001, children have needed their own passports to travel abroad. One of the parents must complete the form entitled *Passport Application for Canadians Under 16 Years of Age*, but **both** parents must give their approval and sign the form. In cases of separation or divorce, only the parent with legal custody of the child may apply for a passport for the child.

The cost of a passport for a child under 3 years of age is \$20 and the document is valid for a maximum of three years. For children 3 to 15 inclusively, a passport costs \$35 and is valid for a maximum of five years.

A word (or rather several words) of advice though: carefully read the application form instructions and do not wait until you just are about to depart before applying, because processing a passport application takes 10 working days if you submit your application at a regional office and 20 working days if you mail your application.

Prior to December 2001, parents could ask for their children's names to be added to one of their passports, but this is no longer the case. However, children who are already listed on one of their parents' passports may continue to travel with that parent as long as the passport remains in effect.

## Procedure

Forms for children under 16 are available at the five regional passport offices (Montréal, Laval, Saint-Laurent, Sainte-Foy and Jonquière) and at Canada Post outlets.

For more information, call the Passport Office at the following number:

- From anywhere in Québec:  
1 800 567-6868

## PWA Program

When the employment income of parents is modest, the Parental Wage Assistance (PWA) Program may be a solution.

Under this program, financial assistance is provided by the ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille to supplement employment income. In addition, the PWA program offers families an allowance of \$5 a day for daycare expenses for every child enrolled in a reduced-contribution (\$7-a-day) daycare program.

The amount of financial assistance the family receives depends on:

- The type of family (single-parent or two-parent)
- Income earned as an employee or self-employed worker, or from commissions
- Other sources of income
- The number of months of work
- The family's assets

This assistance may be paid in the form of a monthly installment for each month of eligibility. At the end of the year, each beneficiary receives a statement of the amounts received, which must be included with their Québec income tax return.

The PWA benefit is not taxable.

For additional information on the PWA program, contact the PWA office in your area or the employment centre in your locality.

In some phone books, it can also be found under the heading "Emploi et Solidarité sociale, Programme APPORT".

## Shelter Allowance Program

Low-income families, namely, workers, employment assistance (social aid) recipients or students with at least one dependent child, who must devote a large part of their income to housing may, under certain conditions, be entitled to the shelter allowance. Financial assistance can be as much as \$80 a month.

The shelter allowance takes the following factors into account:

- The number of persons in the household
- Total household income, as declared on the beneficiary's (and spouse's, where applicable) Québec income tax return in the year prior to application
- The monthly rent

For more information or to obtain an application form, contact the ministère du Revenu du Québec office in your area.

The telephone numbers are listed in the blue pages of the phone book in the Gouvernement du Québec section, under the heading "Revenu, allocation-logement", or under the "Keyword Heading", if any, in the new blue pages: "logement – ministère du Revenu – Allocation-logement".

## "Mon arbre à moi" Campaign

In the "Mon arbre à moi" campaign of the ministère des Ressources naturelles, de la Faune et des Parcs, any child born in the year in progress can receive a small seedling tree that will grow along with him or her. Each seedling given to a child is accompanied by a growth chart and a souvenir certificate to be kept in the child's scrapbook. Seedlings are distributed every year in May, in the context of Tree and Forest Month.

The seedlings given by the department are only about 30 cm to 45 cm high. However, since they are tree species, they will grow a lot. At maturity, i.e. in 75 to 100 years, most of the trees will be 20 m to 30 m tall.

To receive a seedling for their child, parents must apply to the department by completing and returning the "Mon arbre à moi" reply card provided by the health care institution or the birthing centre at the time that the child was born. The parents will be notified by mail just prior to May 2004 of the procedure to follow to receive the seedling. The reply card should reach the department no later than April 15.

For additional information on the campaign, contact:

**Ministère des Ressources naturelles,  
de la Faune et des Parcs  
Direction des communications  
Service aux citoyens**

5700, 4<sup>e</sup> Avenue Ouest, B302  
Charlesbourg (Québec) G1H 6R1  
Phone: (418) 627-8600  
or 1 866 248-6936

Fax: (418) 643-0720

E-mail: [mon-arbre@mrnfp.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:mon-arbre@mrnfp.gouv.qc.ca)

Website:

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# Adoption

For a growing number of people, adoption is the answer to having children in the family. International adoption has contributed greatly to this phenomenon and there has been an increase in recent years in the adoption of children domiciled in Québec. This section of the guide briefly discusses the main steps to take in the process of adopting a child in or outside Québec.

## Steps in Adopting a Child Domiciled in Québec

Adoption has changed in Québec over the last few years. The number of adoptions has increased and more and more children are being placed in order to have a permanent family. The age of the children is generally from birth to three years, but they may be older and are, in some cases, siblings.

Although for the most part native-born Quebecers, the children may also be of different ethnic origins. Some are entrusted to families by their parents, who consent to the adoption. But most often they are under the protection of the Director of Youth Protection, who must apply to the Youth Division of the Court of Québec for a judgment of eligibility for adoption.

They are often from families that cannot provide everything that a child needs to develop harmoniously. The biological parents were unable to improve the situation that led to the decision to remove the child from their environment. Most of the children are oriented toward adoption as part of the Foster-to-Adopt Program.

Child and youth protection centres (CYPC) are responsible for carrying out the adoption procedures for a child domiciled in Québec. The first step in the adoption process is a request by the parents in writing or by phone to the **youth centre in their area**. That pre-registration is followed by an evening information session during which

the future parents can receive answers to their questions. The registration procedure can then officially begin. People interested in pursuing the adoption process must undergo a psychosocial assessment at that time.

Once those steps have been completed, two types of adoption are possible: regular adoption and the Foster-to-Adopt Program.

### Regular Adoption

Some biological parents give the Director of Youth Protection their consent to the adoption of their child. After the expiry of a 30-day time period during which the consent can be withdrawn, the Youth Division issues a placement order that grants the adopter the exercise of parental authority. That order is followed by an adoption judgment.

Note that regular adoption has become very rare in Québec and requires a waiting period of several years for adopting parents.

### Foster-to-Adopt Program

The Foster-to-Adopt program was set up in 1988. Its objective is to enable children at high risk of being abandoned to be placed as soon as possible in a stable family that is prepared to provide foster care with a view to adoption. The stability thereby ensured encourages the child's development in terms of security, and confidence and self-esteem.

The biological parents of children placed under the Foster-to-Adopt Program are grappling with personal problems that prevent them from assuming responsibility for the care, maintenance and upbringing of their children.

People who registered for the Foster-to-Adopt Program want to adopt the child entrusted to them where possible, but they agree to take the child in initially as a foster family. Their project must first undergo a psychosocial assessment. Once their project

is accepted, they are available to be matched with a child whose needs correspond to the conclusions of the assessment. Following the assessment, the waiting period before they can take in a child 0 to 2 years of age varies from 3 to 24 months. The waiting period is shorter for parents who want to take in a child who is 2 years of age or older and has special characteristics, in terms of ethnic origin or state of health, for example.

To find out more about the adoption of a child domiciled in Québec, contact the youth centre in your area.

The address is in the white pages of the telephone book, under “Centre jeunesse”.

## International Adoption

Under the *Youth Protection Act*, the Minister of Health and Social Services, through the intermediary of the Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale (SAI), has the duty to advise the adopter in the steps he or she takes with a view to adopting a child domiciled outside Québec.

The Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale is mandated to:

- coordinate international adoption activities in Québec in the best interests of the children and in keeping with their fundamental rights
- assist and advise the people and families that plan to adopt a child domiciled outside Québec, and ensure that their adoption projects meet the conditions established
- recommend to the Minister of Health and Social Services the certification of international adoption organizations
- advise and support certified organizations and ensure oversight of their activities in the framework prescribed by law
- see that the legislation is applied and that Québec's policy directions and ethical rules for international adoption are complied with
- ensure that adoption-related requirements are met in each case

- advise the authorities of the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux regarding international adoption
- establish, with the competent authorities of foreign countries, working relations and agreements on international adoption that are in keeping with the countries' legislation and culture

The *Civil Code of Québec* provides that any person who wishes to begin the international adoption process must proceed in one of the following three ways:

- through an international adoption organization certified by the Minister of Health and Social Services
- by applying to the SAI, which will act on behalf of the Minister of Health and Social Services
- directly, the adopter acting without an intermediary

### **International adoption procedures carried out with the assistance of a Québec certified organization for a child domiciled outside Québec who is not related to the adopter**

The mission of a certified organization is to defend the rights of the children, promote their interests or improve their living conditions in accordance with the principles to which Québec and the international community adhere. It is responsible for assisting, supporting and advising a potential adopter who seeks its services. It acts as an intermediary for the adopter by taking certain steps in his or her stead. In Québec, only certified organizations can act as international adoption intermediaries.

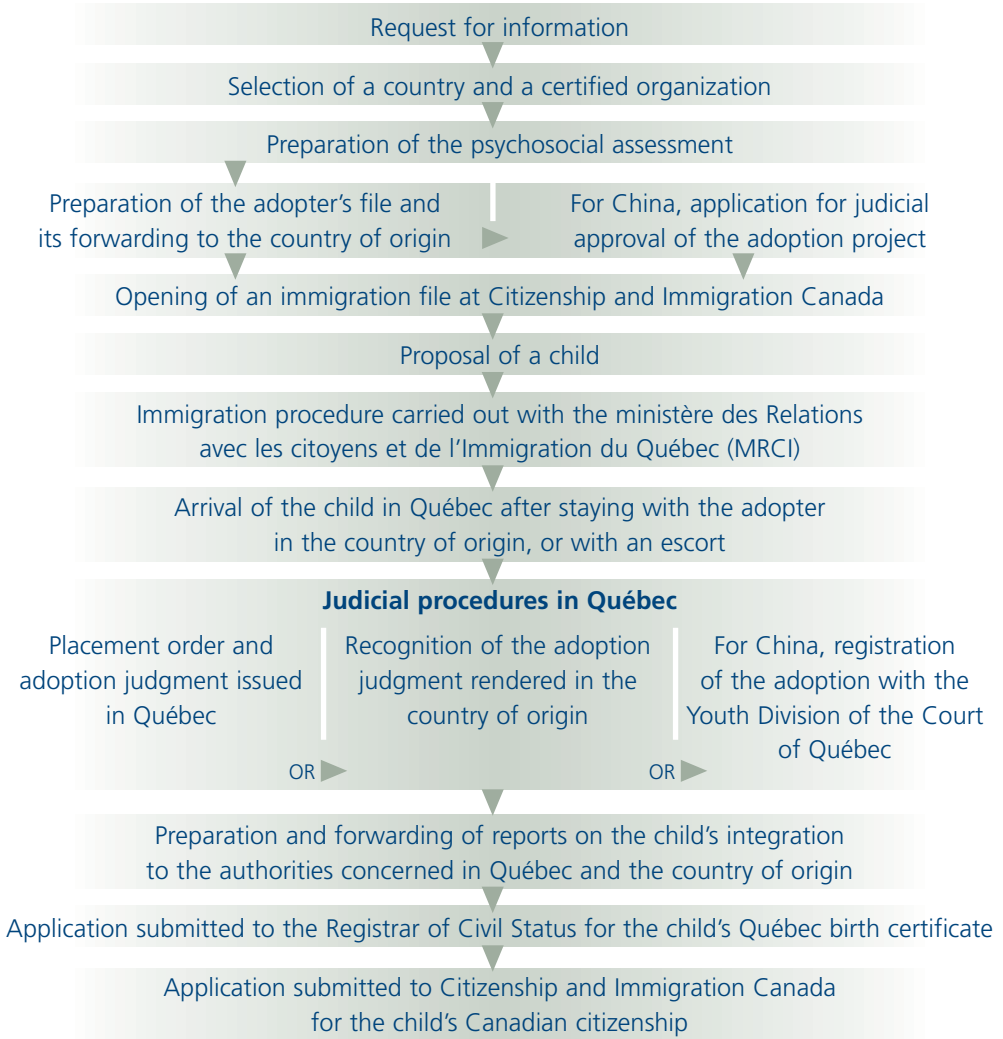
In practical terms, this means that the people in charge of the organization must establish and maintain, in the country for which the organization is certified, harmonious working relations with the authorities in charge of adoption and the resource people concerned. Those relations facilitate the adoption process and procedures in the child's country of origin. In addition, in many cases, certified organizations make a financial contribution to the country of

origin in order to improve living conditions in orphanages and support projects of benefit to the entire community.

The following table summarizes the steps taken in Québec in implementing an international adoption project. It provides a

better understanding of the stages required in adopting a child. The steps may differ slightly, however, depending on the special features of each country of origin.

**Summary of steps in an international adoption project carried out** (with the assistance of a Québec certified organization)



## Request for information

- A person wishing to adopt a child domiciled outside Québec can request information on international adoption from the Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale (SAI) and obtain an information kit containing the information provided on the SAI's Website. The SAI offers general information on international adoption and on the related conditions and procedures.
- If the adopter has questions about a given country, he or she can also direct them to the certified international adoption organizations working in the country.

## Selection of a country and a certified organization

- The adopter chooses the country where he or she wishes to adopt a child and ensures that they meet the requirements of the country of adoption. From the standpoint of Québec, there are three legal requirements: the adopter must be of full age, at least 18 years older than the adopted child and domiciled in Québec.
- The adopter consults the certified organization or organizations working in the country and selects the one with which he or she wishes to work. Some organizations hold information sessions. Others also offer adoption preparation consultation services. The adopter registers with the organization that will work, as an intermediary in the adoption process, with the competent authorities of the country of origin. The adopter and the organization sign a contract that binds them and stipulates the rights and obligations of each party.
- The selection of the country and the organization, as well as the child's age category, are some of the many elements that must be considered by the adopter at the time of the psychosocial assessment. Those elements must be included in the assessment.

## Preparation of the psychosocial assessment

- The psychosocial assessment is required by law and is one of the key elements in the adopter's file. It is essential in enabling the competent authorities in Québec and the country of origin to ensure that the adopter is able to meet the physical, mental and social needs of the child in his or her best interests. Through adoption, the child must be offered an environment conducive to the fulfillment of his or her needs.
- Depending on the requirement of the country of origin of the child and the country where the adoption judgment is rendered, the psychosocial assessment is carried out by the Director of Youth Protection in the adopter's area of residence, a social worker or a psychologist in private practice who is a member of the professional order of psychologists. The adopter may have to provide certain documents that may also be required by the country of origin, such as a medical certificate.
- Three types of recommendations result from the psychosocial assessment:
  - (a) acceptance of the adoption project
  - (b) postponement of the project
  - (c) rejection of the projectOnly if the recommendation is positive can the adoption process be pursued.
- To find out what elements are dealt with in the psychosocial assessment, the adopter should read *The psychosocial assessment: a guide for parents applying for international adoption*. Upon receipt of the psychosocial assessment, the Secrétariat à l'adoption internationale opens the adopter's file.

## For China, an application for judicial approval of the adoption project

- Since 1992, a special law has governed adoptions in Québec of children domiciled in the People's Republic of China. Québec's judicial procedures for adoptions in China differ from those for adoptions in other countries.

- A person who wants to adopt a child in the People's Republic of China must obtain judicial approval for the adoption project from the Youth Division of the Court of Québec before a child is proposed, in order to complete the adopter's file for forwarding to China.
- For the purposes of the Court, the SAI issues a letter (R-5) that is given to the adopter through the certified organization. The letter stipulates that the steps taken have been in accordance with the law and that the psychosocial assessment was positive.

### **Preparation of the adopter's file and its forwarding to the country of origin**

- With the assistance of the certified organization, the adopter assembles his or her adoption file, which contains the documents required by the country of origin, particularly his or her birth certificate, marriage certificate and medical certificate. The organization directs the adopter toward the proper resources, for the translation and authentication of the documents, for example.
- The SAI and certified organizations have set up a procedure for the issuing of letters (the sponsorship approval application, the letter to the foreign authorities, letter R-5 and so on) throughout the adoption process, without the adopter's intervention, upon the request of the organization and after verification by the SAI that the conditions laid down have been abided by.
- The certified organization sends the adopter's file to the child's country of origin. It ensures follow-up of the file with the authorities of the country of origin throughout the adoption process, until the child arrives in Québec. It also ensures that the adopter meets the requirements laid down by the country of origin after the child's arrival.

### **Opening of the immigration file at Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)**

- The adopter signs an undertaking with Canadian and Québec immigration authorities to see to the essential needs of the child as a permanent resident of Canada. The certified organization, in collaboration with the SAI, provides the documents to be filled out.
- First, the adopter mails the CIC an application for approval of the child's sponsorship. This step can be taken at the start of the adoption project even if the child's name is not yet known. It serves solely for the opening of a file and does not constitute authorization for the child's entry into the country. The CIC's Case Processing Centre sends information about the application for the child's sponsorship to the ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration du Québec (MRCI), which also opens a file, and to the Canadian embassy in the country of origin.
- Second, only after a child is proposed and a letter of no objection is issued by the SAI does the adopter complete the sponsorship process with the MRCI.

### **Proposal of a child**

- The adopter is matched with a child by the authorities that handle adoption in the country of origin or by the certified organization. The organization must abide by the order in which the adopter's name is entered on the waiting list on the basis of the special characteristics of applications and the availability of adoptable children (age and sex). The organization gives the proposal of a child to the adopter, who indicates his or her agreement in writing within a certain period of time. Depending on the country, the proposal of a child may be accompanied by other documents (medical information, psychosocial information, photos).

- The organization forwards the adopter's decision to the authorities in the country of origin, which begin or pursue the adoption process. The organization sees that all legal documents (consent to adoption, in particular) and other documents (the child's history, for example) related to the child's adoption are obtained. The organization then forwards the documents to the SAI.
- After verifying the documents and ensuring that the proposal is consistent with the recommendations made in the psychosocial assessment, the SAI issues the letter of no objection to the child's entry into the country. That letter is sent to immigration authorities and confirms that all the documents and procedures comply with requirements and that there is no objection to the child's entry into the country.
- If the proposal differs significantly from the recommendations of the psychosocial assessment, an updated assessment is required (for example, if an older child or siblings instead of a single child are proposed).

### **Immigration procedure carried out with the ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration (MRCI)**

- When the adopter receives the letter of no objection from the SAI, he or she makes an appointment with the MRCI office in the area in order to sign the undertaking for the child. The MRCI sends the required immigration documents (the selection certificate, etc.) to the Canadian embassy in the country of origin, which issues the child's visa after the child has undergone the mandatory immigration medical examination and all the conditions have been fulfilled.
- Only after the adopter has signed the undertaking at the MRCI office and has received the departure authorization of the certified organization can he or she travel to the country of origin to pick up the child.

### **Arrival of the child in Québec after staying with the adopter in the country of origin, or with an escort**

- Depending on the requirements of the country of origin, the adopter travels to the country to pick up the child or meets the child in Québec. In the latter case, a person designated by the certified organization or by the country of origin escorts the child from his or her country to Québec.
- Once immigration procedures are carried out in Québec and the authorities of the country of origin have given their approval, the adopter is informed by the certified organization that he or she can go and pick up the child. The adopter must be sure to take in his or her hand luggage all the required adoption and immigration documents (the selection certificate, for example) so that they can be shown if necessary.
- The organization informs the adopter of the procedure to follow and the steps to take in the country of origin in order to, for example, obtain the adoption judgment and the child's passport, and register the adoption with the competent authorities in the country. If the procedure is not carried out in full by the authorities in the country of origin, the last step in the immigration process is taken with the assistance of the Canadian embassy. The adopter, in collaboration with the certified organization, ensures that the child's mandatory medical examination has been performed, the immigration documents have been submitted and the child's visa has been issued according to certain condition.
- The adopter travels alone, with his or her partner or in a group, depending on the child's country of origin. Some organizations offer services (accompaniment, interpretation) on site to assist the adopter in carrying out the procedure. The length of stay varies according to the country and the situation in each adoption project.

## Judicial procedures in Québec

- The adoption judgment is rendered in the child's country of origin in some cases. Other countries give their approval to the adoption of the child or his or her placement with the adoptive family, but the adoption judgment must be rendered in Québec. In the latter case, the Québec judgment is preceded by a placement order. In the case of the People's Republic of China, the adoption project is approved by the Youth Division of the Court of Québec at the start of the adoption process. The Court's registration certificate must then be obtained after the child's arrival in Québec.
- In Québec, adoption is said to be "plenary", which means that the adoptee's new filiation is substituted for his or her original filiation. The adoptee ceases to belong to his or her original family. The adoption produces the same rights and obligations as filiation by blood.

## Placement order and adoption judgment issued in Québec

- Through a placement order of the Youth Division of the Court of Québec, the child is entrusted to his or her adoptive family for a minimum of six months before the adoption judgment is rendered. The placement order gives the adopter all rights related to the exercise of parental authority.
- To obtain a placement order, the adopter prepares a joint application with the Director of Youth Protection in the area where he or she is domiciled. The application is sent to the Youth Division of the Court of Québec. This is when the adopter chooses the child's given and family names, which will become final at the time of the adoption judgment.
- During this period, a professional mandated by the youth centre—often the person who prepared the psychosocial assessment—meets with the family and prepares a report on the child's progress in, and adjustment to, the new environment. This integration report is filed with the Court. In most cases, during the same period and subsequently, the adopter must also file

reports for the authorities of the country of origin. These reports are known as family and social integration reports (or "progress reports").

- During the process relating to the placement order, the Court ensures that adoption conditions have been met and that consent to adoption has been validly obtained.

## Adoption judgment in Québec

- In order to obtain the adoption judgment, the adopter files an application with the Youth Division of the Court of Québec in the area where he or she is domiciled, along with the "intermediary letter" issued by the SAI. The intermediary letter certifies that the procedures have been carried out in accordance with the law.

## Recognition of the judgment rendered in the country of origin

- If the adoption judgment is handed down by a court in the country of origin, it must be judicially recognized by the Youth Division of the Court of Québec, which ensures, in particular, that the rules governing consent to adoption and the eligibility of the child for adoption have been complied with. According to the *Civil Code of Québec*, a foreign judgment must be judicially recognized in Québec so that it has the same effect as a Québec adoption.
- The adopter files a motion with the Youth Division of the Court of Québec, along with the SAI intermediary letter, so that the judgment rendered abroad is recognized in Québec.
- When the adoption judgment is recognized, the given and family names that the adopter has chosen for the child become final.

### **For China, registration of the adoption with the Youth Division of the Court of Québec**

- When the adopter returns to Canada with the adopted child, he or she sees that the adoption is registered with the Youth Division of the Court of Québec. The adopter submits his or her application to the Clerk of the Court, along with certain documents, such as the child's birth certificate and the notarial certificate from China. The adopter indicates the child's given and family names. The Clerk of the Court gives the adopter a registration certificate that is entered in the Court record. That procedure certifies that the adoption conditions have been met.

### **Preparation and forwarding of reports on the child's integration to the authorities concerned in Québec and the country of origin**

- In addition to the report or reports required by the Court of Québec in order to issue the placement order or adoption judgment, the adopter must periodically submit progress reports on the child's development and integration into his or her new environment, as required by the country of origin. Depending on the circumstances, the reports used by the Court of Québec may also be used to meet the requirements of the country of origin. The frequency and number of family and social integration reports may vary according to the country's requirements. They may be prepared by a social worker, a psychologist mandated by a youth centre or in private practice, or the actual adopter. The certified organization sends these reports and their translation, if required, to the country of origin.

### **Application submitted to the Registrar of Civil Status for the child's Québec birth certificate**

- When the Québec adoption judgment is rendered, a foreign judgment is recognized or the adoption is registered, the Clerk of the Youth Division of the Court of Québec sends a copy of the judgment or certificate of registration to the Registrar of Civil Status so that the child is automatically registered. There is a waiting period of 30 days before the child's birth certificate can be issued in accordance with his or her new filiation. After that period, the adopter can obtain a copy of the child's new birth certificate by applying to the Registrar of Civil Status.

### **Application submitted to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) for the child's Canadian citizenship**

- To obtain Canadian citizenship for the child, the parent must submit an application to the CIC. The citizenship certificate is essential for obtaining a passport and the right to vote when the child reaches full age.
- That process is completed at the end of the judicial procedures for adoption in Québec. It is very important to the countries of origin that the child obtain his or her citizenship. Some countries require a copy of the certificate of citizenship.

## Private adoption

Private adoption means that the parents themselves carry out the procedures.

There are two types of private adoptions:

- Adoptions of children related to the adopter, i.e. adoptions in which there is a kinship relationship between the adopter and the adoptee. These are called “family” adoptions
- Adoptions of children who are not related to the adopters

Since the two types of private adoption are obviously very different, note that only the adoption of children who are not related to adopters is described below.

Bear in mind that international adoption is in keeping with a comprehensive child protection policy. Therefore, whether it is private or is carried out through a certified organization or the SAI, it must be done according to procedures and through intervening parties oriented toward protecting the child. In all cases, every effort is made to combat the abuse, trafficking, abduction and sale of children, undue pressure on biological parents and the falsification of documents that may occur in cases of private adoption.

Private adoption is permitted in Québec, provided the adopters consult the Minister through the intermediary of the SAI, which, as stipulated in section 72.3.2 of the *Youth Protection Act*, oversees the adoption:

*72.3.2 Where the adopter elects to take the steps himself with a view to adoption of a child domiciled outside Québec, pursuant to article 564 of the Civil Code, he shall consult the Minister; the Minister shall verify that, in the light of the information available to him, the planned procedure contains no irregularities and, where necessary, he shall consult the competent authorities in Québec or in the State of domicile of the child.*

If a person chooses private adoption, he or she must first contact the SAI, which, as part of its mission to inform and advise adopters, will warn the adopter of the risks inherent in such a procedure. The SAI will also make the necessary verifications and lay the groundwork for a strict procedure designed in the best interests of the children and the adopters. The SAI treats each situation with care and takes its special features into consideration. However, it must be clearly understood that the SAI will not act as an intermediary in these adoption projects. The adopter remains wholly responsible for the steps involved in his or her adoption project, both in Québec and abroad.

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Website:

[www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/adoption](http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/adoption)

## Resource Material

We strongly recommend that you read the following brochures and leaflets. They are available from the departments and organizations that publish them. Many are also available from Communication-Québec.

- *Shelter Allowance: We Can Help You Pay Your Rent*, Société d'habitation du Québec (leaflet)
- *Parental Wage Assistance/Are You a Low-Wage Earner With Children?*, ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille (brochure)
- *Employment Insurance/Maternity, parental and sickness benefits*, Human Resources Development Canada (brochure)
- *Pour un bébé en bonne santé, trois prestations spéciales : grossesse, allaitement, soutien à l'achat de préparations lactées*, ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille (small brochure)
- *Future Parents*, Directeur de l'état civil (leaflet)
- *Filiation*, ministère de la Justice du Québec (leaflet)
- *Birth*, Directeur de l'état civil (leaflet)
- *La politique familiale / Des réponses à vos questions*, ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille (leaflet)
- *Le programme éducatif des centres de la petite enfance*, ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille (leaflet)
- *The Québec Health Insurance Plan*, Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (leaflet)
- *The basic prescription drug insurance plan*, Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec (leaflet)
- *Labour Standards in Québec*, Commission des normes du travail du Québec (tabloid)
- *Safe Working Conditions for a Safe Maternity Experience*, Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (leaflet)
- *A Child Seat Improperly Installed Means Danger!*, Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (leaflet)
- *Your Canada Child Tax Benefit*, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (T4114-e, Rev. 02) (leaflet)

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Throughout Québec: 1 800 665-0354

Commission des normes du travail  
Throughout Québec: (514) 864-3920 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Communication-Québec  
Montréal area: (514) 873-4626  
Elsewhere in Québec: 1 800 361-9596

Human Resources Development Canada  
Montréal area: (514) 875-7615  
Elsewhere in Québec: 1 800 529-3742

Ministère du Revenu du Québec  
Montréal area: (514) 873-4455  
Elsewhere in Québec: 1 800 361-3795

Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec  
Québec City area: (418) 682-3939  
Elsewhere in Québec: 1 800 361-3939

Régie des rentes du Québec  
Throughout Québec: 1 800 603-3540

Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec  
Montréal area: (514) 954-7763  
Elsewhere in Québec: 1 800 565-7763

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# Québec Government National Portal on the Internet

For any information on the programs and services of the Québec government, simply visit the Québec government national portal at [www.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.gouv.qc.ca)

You can also call the following number from anywhere in Québec:  
**1 800 363-1363 (toll free).**

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