

THAILAND INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION PROGRAMME

Last Updated: June 2025



Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption	Thailand ratified the 'Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption' in 2004. As both Thailand and New Zealand are signatories to the Convention, all adoptions must comply with the Convention's principles and procedural safeguards to be recognised and for the child to be entitled to reside in New Zealand.
The Thai Central Authority	The Thai Central Authority under the Hague Convention is the Child Adoption Center, Department of Children and Youth, Ministry for Social Development and Human Security, Bangkok, Thailand
Legislation	The adoption is completed under the New Zealand Adoption (Intercountry) Act 1997 and the Hague Convention. The applicants are given custody of the child in Thailand (i.e. not an adoption at this stage). The family then return to New Zealand for a six-month pre-adoption period. Once satisfactorily completed, the adoption is finalised under Thai law and is recognised by New Zealand.
Facilitation	<p>There are two routes by which New Zealand applicants can undertake an intercountry adoption of a non-related Thai child.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Oranga Tamariki–Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) Applicants may adopt using the services of Oranga Tamariki and the New Zealand Central Authority (NZCA). 2) Accredited Bodies: Inter-Country Adoption New Zealand (ICANZ) OR Compassion for Orphans (CfO) Applicants may choose to use the services of an accredited body and the New Zealand Central Authority (NZCA). ICANZ with its representative in Thailand, Friends For All Children (FFAC), and Compassion for Orphans have been accredited to facilitate intercountry adoptions between Thailand and New Zealand. An adoption by any of these routes is overseen and certified by the respective Central Authorities.
Relatives	Adoptions of relatives may be undertaken via an application to Oranga Tamariki. Whilst Thai law may permit New Zealanders living in Thailand or Thai relatives living in New Zealand to adopt in Thailand using Thai domestic adoption legislation, such an adoption will not be recognised by New Zealand and therefore will not enable the adopted child to right of entry, citizenship, and/or residence in New Zealand. A Hague compliant process is required for a Thai child's New Zealand rights to be established.
Citizenship and Residency	Oranga Tamariki, ICANZ, and CfO can only facilitate adoptions from Thailand for New Zealand Citizens or Permanent Residents who are habitually resident in New Zealand.

Travel Requirements	Both applicants are required to travel to Thailand. The adoption process in Thailand takes around 7 to 10 days. Interpreters may be required, particularly outside Bangkok.
Extent of Programme	<p>Oranga Tamariki</p> <p>Since 2021 the NZCA has been advised that Thailand would not accept any new applications for children under 4 years but will consider applications for special needs children. (Details of the Oranga Tamariki Programme are listed below)</p> <p>Accredited Bodies</p> <p>Please contact ICANZ and CfO directly regarding their criteria and costs.</p> <p>ICANZ Website: www.icanz.org.nz Email: office@icanz.org.nz Telephone: 09 623 9369</p> <p>CfO Website: www.cfo.org.nz Email: Through their website Telephone: 0800 236 000</p>
Children Available	<p>Oranga Tamariki</p> <p>4+ years or medical conditions = special needs Thailand has a particular need to place children six years and over.</p>
Birth Family History	Limited as children are usually abandoned
Applicant Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both applicants must be over 25. There is no upper age limit, although younger is preferred. • Over two children in existing family require special Thai Child Adoption Board approval. • For couples, legal marriage is required but no length of marriage is stipulated. • Applicants may have no more than two divorces combined. • Single female applicants may apply for a special needs' adoption. • Since March 2025, same sex married couples can apply though the Oranga Tamariki programme. (Please speak directly to ICANZ and CfO about their criteria)
Number of Children	One child at one time, unless relative criteria met
Approximate Fees for Facilitation	Applicants are required to pay for translation costs of documents (around \$4,500 to \$6,000). Applicants also need to add travel and accommodation costs to this amount.
Donation to Orphanage	None
Timeframe	<p>From application to offer of child: 3 to 4 years</p> <p>From applicants' acceptance to Thai Authority interview: Currently varies - around 3 to 6 months</p>
Post-Placement Reports	Three bi-monthly reports covering the first six months of placement undertaken by Oranga Tamariki. There is no fee for this.
<p><i>This fact sheet provides a brief general overview of the Thailand Child Adoption Centre requirements and process. Intercountry adoption criteria, processes, costs, and the children in need of intercountry adoption change frequently. Applicants should speak to a social worker to confirm the most up to date information.</i></p>	